



COLORADO COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE LITERACY PLAN



COLORADO
Department of Education



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Executive Summary

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) aims for all students, from birth through grade 12, to be proficient in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Recognizing the many stakeholders involved in fostering literacy, this goal requires a collaborative effort across departments, divisions, and organizations supporting families and children. Significant strides have been made through the READ Act and subsequent revisions, with K-3 teachers completing state-mandated Science of Reading training in 2019. Achieving literacy by third grade is essential for student success, and despite third-grade literacy proficiency stabilizing at 41%, continued support for K-3 instruction is crucial, along with support for students before kindergarten and after third grade. To meet English language arts standards across all grades, Colorado will leverage statewide efforts, including early childhood programs, language acquisition initiatives, diverse learner programs, and family/community partnerships. The Comprehensive Literacy Plan will support Colorado's 1,927 schools in 179 districts, serving 883,264 students.

This comprehensive literacy plan addresses literacy from birth through 12th grade, encompassing oral language, listening, speaking, writing, and reading for all students. The document outlines the state's literacy landscape, detailing legislation and policies related to literacy instruction, student achievement data, and the needs of target populations. The plan aligns with other state initiatives, sets literacy goals, and describes evidence-based activities, implementation strategies, and continuous improvement. The Colorado Department of Education is an active partner and collaborator with thousands of talented and dedicated educators across the state. In its ongoing collaboration with educators, CDE engages a broad and diverse group of stakeholders to develop resources that outline high-impact, evidence-based strategies for effective instruction in schools and classrooms to meet Colorado students' literacy needs.

This comprehensive literacy plan aims to help achieve the ambitious goal of literacy attainment for all students. Literacy proficiency is critical to developing thinkers and lifelong learners who will build communities and address complex local and global problems. By developing readers, writers, and communicators, we are changing lives and transforming neighborhoods, communities, and society. This literacy plan provides an intentional, comprehensive, and coherent approach to literacy across the state, aiming to close achievement gaps and significantly increase reading and writing performance for all students. Key principles guiding this evidence-based plan are equity and access for all students, flexibility, choice and innovation, continuous improvement of systems and structures, and fostering collaboration and partnerships.

Vision, Mission, and Strategy

Our Vision

To create an equitable educational environment where all students and staff in Colorado thrive.

Our Priorities



Our Strategy

- **Strong Language and Emerging Literacy Foundations:** High-quality preschool programs and universal preschool access.
- **Comprehensive Literacy Instruction:** Multi-faceted approach to teaching reading and writing, incorporating evidence-based strategies and support systems.
- **Quality Schools:** Continuous cycle of improvement aimed at enhancing student learning and system effectiveness.
- **Expansive Educational Opportunities:** Access to high-quality learning experiences, both inside and outside the classroom.
- **Distinguished and Highly Skilled Educators:** Provide opportunities through the CDE and collaborating with higher education institutions and alternative pathway programs to refine curricula, enhance professional learning for faculty, and support diverse teaching routes
- **Commitment to High Standards and Excellence for Students:** Ensures that curricula align with rigorous state standards to support literacy development across all grade levels.





Colorado's Literacy Strategy

Colorado's vision is for all students to graduate ready for college, careers, and productive citizenship. Recognizing the essential role of literacy in achieving this vision, we have identified six key initiatives: Strong Foundations, Comprehensive Literacy Instruction, Quality Schools, Expansive Educational Opportunities, Distinguished and Highly Skilled Educators, and Commitment to High Standards and Excellence for Students. These initiatives support learners in acquiring essential literacy skills. We urge districts and schools to align their efforts and funding with a comprehensive local literacy plan, ensuring a clear strategy to maximize student achievement. Synchronizing our efforts will strengthen and guarantee success for all students.

Strong Language and Emerging Literacy Foundations

Strong Foundations in Colorado education emphasizes high-quality preschool programs and universal preschool access. These initiatives aim to provide a solid educational start for young learners. By investing in early childhood education, Colorado ensures a comprehensive approach to building a robust foundation for lifelong learning and success.

Key programs that contribute to strong foundations in Colorado include:

- [Quality Preschool Rating System - Colorado Shines](#): This system ensures high-quality preschool education by rating and improving early learning programs.
- [Universal Preschool](#): Provides high-quality early learning opportunities that address preschool literacy standards, ensuring all children are prepared for future academic success.
- [Colorado Department of Early Childhood](#): Formed in 2021, this department oversees and coordinates focused early childhood learning programs and initiatives, enhancing the state's commitment to early education
- [Literacy Coursework for Early Childhood Teachers and Childcare Professionals](#): Coursework in literacy is available to early childhood teachers and childcare professionals, ensuring that the youngest learners have teachers trained in research and evidence-based literacy instruction.

Comprehensive Literacy Instruction

Comprehensive literacy instruction encompasses a multi-faceted approach to teaching reading and writing, incorporating evidence-based strategies and support. It includes professional development for educators, individualized instruction, resources for students at all grade levels, and specialized programs for those with diverse needs, including English language learners, migrant students, and students with disabilities. The goal is to provide all students with the skills necessary to become proficient readers and writers, ensuring equitable access to quality literacy education.

Key Programs contributing to comprehensive literacy instruction and support include:

- [Colorado Academic Standards](#): Rigorous standards outlining essential literacy skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening, ensuring students meet grade-level expectations for success.



- **Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS):** Expands the MTSS model to identify and support students at risk for literacy problems with targeted interventions.
- **Guiding Policy:** The Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (Colorado READ Act) was passed by the Colorado legislature in 2012, giving the state the guiding philosophy, structure and resources to get children reading at grade level by the time they enter the fourth grade.
- **Evidence-Based Reading Training:** Under Colorado's SB 19-199, all K-3 teachers are mandated to complete evidence-based reading training, aligning with updates to the Colorado READ Act. Starting with the 2024-2025 budget year, school districts must also provide proof that principals and administrators have completed this training in the science of reading, ensuring comprehensive professional development across educational leadership.
- **Curriculum Transparency for Early Literacy:** Senate Bill 21-151 enacted the Literacy Curriculum Transparency Act. The act amends the Colorado READ Act, requiring local education providers to report their reading curriculum, interventions, and supports by grade and school, the number of K-3 students with READ plans and those proficient in reading, and a budget with a narrative on READ Act funds.
- **Dyslexia Resources:** CDE curated resources, legislation information, professional development, and structured literacy support for students with dyslexia. (Includes Handbook, Dyslexia Working Group, and Dyslexia Pilot Program)
- **Structured Literacy Project:** Focuses on integrating the Science of Reading and Evidence-Based Instructional Practices in early reading for grades K-3 through professional development, embedded coaching, and instructional resources.
- **Institute of Higher Education Reviews on Literacy Programs/Coursework:** Conducts cyclical reviews of educator preparation programs to ensure alignment with the Science of Reading.
- **Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education:** The Office of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education provides professional development and training for teachers to support English language learners through workshops and online modules.
- **Migrant Education Program:** Supports migrant children and youth with educational services and opportunities, aiming to help them overcome educational barriers to become successful readers and prepare for postsecondary education or employment.
- **Professional Development for Students with Disabilities:** Specialized training and resources for educators working with students with disabilities, including those with autism spectrum disorder, who are blind or visually impaired, who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, or those with other significant support needs.
- **Instructional Materials in Specialized Formats:** Searchable online repository of digital source files for k-12 instructional materials. Files can be used to create a variety of specialized formats, such as large print, braille, digital audio, or digital text, on behalf of qualifying students who are blind, visually impaired or print-disabled in elementary or secondary school.



Quality Schools

Colorado is dedicated to fostering high-quality schools through a continuous cycle of improvement aimed at enhancing student learning and system effectiveness. This commitment is reflected in several key initiatives and programs that also provide opportunities for professional development and expanded student opportunities through grant programs.

Key initiatives and programs contributing to quality schools:

- **Unified Improvement Process:** Colorado engages in a robust improvement cycle to boost student learning and system effectiveness. This involves using a comprehensive process to meet state, federal, and program accountability requirements, in compliance with the Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (READ Act).
- **Colorado Turnaround Network:** The Colorado Turnaround Network accelerates student achievement in select schools through targeted support, resources, and flexibility. The network helps schools develop rigorous improvement plans focused on four research-based conditions to enhance student literacy achievement: culture shift, instructional transformation, talent development, and leadership.
- **Grant Programs:** Grant programs have been instrumental in enhancing literacy and overall school quality across Colorado. These grants collectively support immediate literacy needs and promote long-term systemic improvements in literacy across Colorado schools and districts.
 - **Comprehensive Early Literacy Grant (ELG) Program:** Established by the 2012 Colorado READ Act, this program focuses on implementing and sustaining evidence-based reading instruction to improve early literacy.
 - **Expanded Early Literacy Grants:** House Bill 18-1393 expanded the READ Act to include Sustainability Grants for schools completing the ELG Program and a Literacy Professional Development Grant.
 - **Early Literacy Assessment Tool Project:** The intent of the program was to support state purchase of software that would provide individualized assessments with immediate results, store and analyze those results, and recommend activities based on those results.
 - **Comprehensive Literacy State Development Program:** A competitive federal grant aiming to improve literacy using evidence-based practices.
 - **EASI Grant:** The Empowering Action for School Improvement Grant matches schools' needs with evidence-based strategies and resources through a streamlined application process.
 - **High-Impact Tutoring Program:** Since 2021, the HITP Grant team has actively supported the implementation of high-impact tutoring across Colorado.



Expansive Educational Opportunities

Colorado is committed to broadening educational opportunities to ensure all students have access to high-quality learning experiences, both inside and outside the classroom. These efforts collectively reflect Colorado's commitment to providing a broad spectrum of educational opportunities, ensuring that every student has the resources and choices necessary to succeed academically and personally.

This dedication is evident in various initiatives designed to provide diverse and expansive educational options:

- **Supportive Literacy Programs and Partnerships:** The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) collaborates with libraries and literacy organizations to maximize literacy opportunities for readers of all ages. These partnerships aim to improve access to quality literature and instruction, fostering a love for reading and supporting literacy development.
 - [Colorado State Library](#): An initiative that enhances literacy efforts through library resources and programming.
 - [Colorado Libraries for Early Literacy](#): Collaborates with organizations around the world to provide Early Literacy information and resources for librarians, children, and their caregivers.
 - [Imagination Library of Colorado](#): Provides free books to children from birth to age five, promoting early literacy and a lifelong love of reading.
- **Services through Colorado BOCES:** The Colorado Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) offers a range of services designed to equalize educational opportunities across various districts. These services support schools and students in accessing resources and programs that might otherwise be unavailable.
- **Alternative Pathways and Options:** Colorado provides alternative pathways and options for high school and post-secondary planning to accommodate diverse student needs and interests. These pathways include career and technical education programs, dual enrollment opportunities, and other non-traditional routes to graduation and career readiness.
- **Office of Adult Education Initiatives:** This office supports adult education programs throughout the state with funding, program oversight, and technical assistance. These efforts aim to provide adults with opportunities for education and skill development, contributing to lifelong learning and career advancement.
- **Gifted Education Programs:** Colorado ensures that all public schools, including charter schools, identify and serve gifted students. Gifted education programs are designed to meet the unique needs of students with advanced abilities and support their continued growth and development.
- **Diverse Educational Choices:** Colorado families have access to a wide range of educational options, allowing them to choose the best fit for their child's needs. These options include traditional public schools, public charter schools, public magnet schools, private schools, online learning, homeschooling, and microschooling.



Distinguished and Highly Skilled Educators

Colorado is dedicated to cultivating exceptional educators through top-tier preparation programs, comprehensive professional development, and strategic partnerships. This commitment includes providing opportunities through the CDE and collaborating with higher education institutions and alternative pathway programs to refine curricula, enhance professional learning for faculty, and support diverse teaching routes. The approval and re-authorization process for these institutions upholds rigorous standards.

- **Educator Talent:** Works to develop, deploy and support talent management and human capital development strategies for districts and schools so that the most effective educators are in every school and classroom and all students are prepared for college, career, and life.
- **TEACH Colorado:** Supports those interested in teaching by providing personalized resources and support for each stage of the career-decision making process.
- **Educator Development:** Supports the growth of Colorado educators and leaders. Primary focuses include the Principal Leadership Institute (PLI), induction, and professional development.
- **Collaborative for Educator Effectiveness, Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR Center):** The CEEDAR Center, funded by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), works with states to build the capacity of their personnel preparation systems to prepare teachers and leaders to implement evidence-based practices for students with disabilities.
- **Educator Preparation Program Authorization:** CDE oversees the authorization and reauthorization of both alternative and traditional educator preparation programs at higher education institutions.
- **Educator Recruitment and Retention Program:** Created by SB21-185 to provide qualified program applicants with up to \$10,000 in one-time financial assistance toward their educator preparation program costs. Recipients must commit to teaching in a shortage area for three years in a Colorado public school.

Commitment to High Standards and Excellence for Students

Colorado is unwavering in our commitment to maintaining high standards and excellence in education for all students. The state ensures that curricula align with rigorous state standards to support literacy development across all grade levels. This commitment is reflected in the Elementary Teacher Literacy Standards, Principal Literacy Standards, and the Reading, Writing, and Communicating Academic Standards. To enhance instructional quality, we offer comprehensive support on various topics including disciplinary literacy, Social-Emotional Learning, and Culturally Responsive Teaching. Our professional learning opportunities further support teachers in adopting best practices. Through regional, state, and national collaboratives, Colorado ensures educators are well-equipped to deliver excellence in literacy instruction and beyond.

- **Elementary Teacher Literacy Standards:** The Elementary Teacher Literacy Standards are part of the K-6 Elementary Education Endorsement required by the Colorado State Board of Education. Updated in 2016 to align with the Colorado Academic Standards and the READ Act, these standards define the essential knowledge and skills K-6 teachers need to effectively teach reading proficiency.

- **Principal Literacy Standards:** The Colorado Principal Literacy Standards, developed as part of SB 22-004, were developed to establish clear expectations for school leaders regarding literacy instruction and improvement. These standards outline the knowledge and skills principals need to support effective literacy instruction, ensuring alignment with research-based practices.
- **Reading, Writing, And Communicating Academic Standards:** The Colorado Academic Standards in Reading, Writing, and Communicating are designed for all students, encompassing essential content, skills, and language conventions in English. For students who are not yet proficient in English, these standards can be used alongside the Colorado English Language Proficiency standards to help educators offer the necessary support, ensuring all English learners meet the established expectations.
- **Best, First Instruction:** Best, First Instruction (BFI) ensures that all students have the opportunity to learn grade-level content effectively on their first exposure. BFI integrates culturally responsive teaching, practice-based learning, and high-quality standards and curriculum to build strong relationships, meet diverse needs, create relevant learning experiences, and foster disciplinary literacy.
- **Social Emotional Learning Opportunities:** Resources to support participants in the development of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) plans and instruction based on identified building-level and student-specific needs.





Literacy Legislation and Policy Overview

The READ Act, the focal point of literacy legislation in Colorado, was established by the State Legislature in 2012. It aims to ensure all students read at grade level by the end of third grade and has evolved through continuous improvements and legislative updates to enhance support for students, teachers, and schools statewide.

HB 12-1238 - Colorado READ Act

The Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (Colorado READ Act) was passed by the Colorado legislature in 2012, giving the state the guiding philosophy, structure and resources to get children reading at grade level by the time they enter the fourth grade.

- **Annual Reading Assessments:** Starting in the 2013-14 school year, districts are required to annually assess K-3 students' reading abilities using CDE-approved tests. The department must create a list of approved instructional and professional development programs for districts.
- **Reporting Significant Reading Deficiencies:** Districts must report the number of K-3 students with significant reading deficiencies (SRDs) to the Department of Education.
- **Individual READ Plans:** Individual READ plans must be created for students identified with significant reading deficiencies.
- **Per-Pupil Funding:** The program diverts interest revenue from the state school lands permanent fund to provide per-pupil funding to districts working with students with SRDs.
- **Required Interventions:** Districts receiving per-pupil funding must use specific interventions as part of their literacy programs.
- **Funding Allocation:** Funding is allocated for CDE administration costs and for professional development grants to districts.

HB 15-1323 - Changes to Assessments

HB 15-1323 introduced changes to state assessments, including some changes to READ Act assessments:

For Kindergarten:

- **Assessment Window:** Districts have a 90-day window at the start of the school year to administer an approved reading interim assessment.
- **READ Act and School Readiness:** If the READ Act assessment is administered within the first 60 days, the literacy component of the school readiness assessment is not required.
- **Diagnostic Assessment:** For students identified with a significant reading deficiency, a diagnostic assessment must be administered within 60 days to determine specific reading skill deficiencies.
- **READ Plan:** The student's READ plan must be included in the school readiness plan for those identified with a significant reading deficiency, aligning with READ Act requirements and past CDE guidance.



For Grades K-3:

- **Diagnostic Assessment Window:** Teachers must administer a diagnostic assessment within 60 days of the previous assessment for students with significant reading deficiencies.
- **Reading Competency:** Districts are not required to administer READ Act interim assessments to students who demonstrate grade-level reading competency for the remainder of the school year.
- **Guidance:** The CDE has worked with assessment providers to set cut-scores for grade-level reading competency to help districts determine whether students meet the required reading level.

HB 17-1160 - Language Choice in Early Literacy Assessments

HB 17-1160 creates additional flexibility for English Language Learners in kindergarten through third grade so that they can take reading assessments in their native language while still developing proficiency in English.

- **Assessment Language Options:** Allows a student whose native language is Spanish to take reading assessments in English or Spanish. An English assessment may also be given upon parent request.
- **Additional Language Assessments:** If the state board approves reading assessments in languages other than English or Spanish, ELL students may take the assessments in their native language. An English assessment may also be given upon parent request.
- **Proficiency Score Review:** Review the student's most recent English proficiency scores to decide if assessments should be in a language other than English. Ensure students with partial proficiency or higher take at least one reading assessment in English annually.
- **Parental Communication:** Inform parents, in a language they understand, about the English proficiency level required for their child to take at least one reading assessment in English. If the student has a significant reading deficiency, provide the necessary information in clear language. HB 18-1393 – Effective Implementation of READ Act

HB 18-13-93: Effective Implementation of READ Act

House Bill 18-1393 introduces several key measures to enhance literacy education and assessment in Colorado:

- **Evidence-Based Assessments and Programming:** Ensures that all assessments and literacy programs are evidence-based or scientifically based, and aligned with state academic standards.
- **Regular Review of Assessments and Programs:** Directs the state board and the department to review the approved list of assessments every 4 years, and the advisory lists of literacy programming and professional development programs every 2 years.
- **Appeals Process:** Mandates that the appeals process for materials on the assessment and advisory lists include appeals by local education providers such as school districts, boards of cooperative services, and charter schools, with the department considering relevant materials provided by appellants.
- **Transparent Review Process:** Requires the department to ensure a transparent process for reviewing and adding assessments and materials to the approved and advisory lists, including consultation with local education providers.



- **New Grant Programs:** Introduces two additional grant programs – Sustainability Grants for those completing a Comprehensive Early Literacy Grant, and an Annual Literacy Professional Development Grant.
- **READ Plan Working Group:** Establishes Colorado’s READ Plan Working Group to review and enhance the creation and use of individual student READ plans for improved effectiveness.

SB 19-199 - Strengthening the READ Act

In response to observed stagnation in literacy progress, Senate Bill 19-199 was introduced to refine and intensify efforts under the READ Act. This legislation focuses on enhancing accountability and optimizing the use of funds to drive meaningful improvements in early literacy education. The key updates include:

- **Evidence-Based Training Requirement:** Starting in the 2021-22 school year, districts receiving READ funds or Early Literacy Grant funds must ensure all K-3 teachers complete evidence-based reading training. Teachers were required to pass an end-of-course assessment and provide evidence of their completion.
- **Free Training Provided by CDE:** CDE was required to provide a no-cost evidence-based reading instruction training option.
- **Annual Budget Submission:** Districts must submit a detailed annual budget and narrative before accessing per-pupil intervention funds.
- **Expanded Use of Funds:** Funds can be used for CDE-approved core reading instructional programs and technology (e.g., software for assessing and monitoring student progress).
- **Monitoring and Capping:** CDE must monitor and audit district fund usage. Districts can retain a maximum of 15% of the per-pupil intervention funds year-to-year.
- **UIP Requirements:** Districts must detail their reading assessments, curriculum, instructional programs, and intervention services in their unified improvement plans.
- **Professional Development Considerations for ELG:** Districts receiving per-pupil or Early Literacy Grant funds must outline their professional development plans for teachers before receiving funds.
- **Mandatory Evaluation:** The CDE was required to hire an external evaluator to conduct a multiyear assessment of READ Act implementation, including the use of per-pupil and Early Literacy Grant funds.

SB 21-151 - Literacy Curriculum Transparency

The act amends the READ Act to require each local education provider to submit the following information to CDE and requires the department to post the information on its website:

- **Reading Curriculum Details:** A detailed description of the core and supplemental reading curriculum by grade used in each of the local education provider's schools.
- **Instructional Programs and Supports:** Outline the core and supplemental reading instructional programs, intervention reading instruction, services, and other supports provided in each of the local education provider's schools.

- **READ Plans and Student Progress:** Report the number of students enrolled in K-3 who have READ plans, as well as the number of students who have achieved reading competency.
- **Budget and Narrative for Intervention Funds:** Must submit a budget and narrative explanation for the use of READ Act funds.
- **Website Links:** LEAs/Districts must link on their website and on their schools' websites to the page on the department's website where the information is posted.

SB 22-004 - Expansion of Evidence-Based Training

The bill required expanded training requirements in scientifically and evidence-based reading instruction and encouraged public libraries to train staff in the science of reading and participate in state and local literacy planning.

- **K-3 Principal and Administrator Requirement:** Starting with the 2024-25 school year, all K-3 principals and administrators must complete evidenced-based training designed for K-3 principals and administrators in the science of reading that addresses the content of the principal literacy standards. LEAs must submit verification of compliance with these new training requirements beginning in FY 2024-25. The CDE will provide this training at no cost upon request.
- **K-12 Reading Interventionists:** All teachers who provide literacy instruction to students in grades K-3 and reading interventionists K-12 must complete evidenced-based training in teaching reading.
- **Public Library Involvement:** The bill encourages public library directors to collaborate with the CDE to offer evidence-based training in the science of reading instruction to librarians working with early grade readers. The CDE will also provide this training at no cost upon request. Public libraries may also provide evidence-based materials and activities to support reading improvement.





State Literacy Needs

The Colorado Comprehensive Statewide Literacy Plan will address gaps and weaknesses in the state’s literacy support infrastructure, prioritizing high-need communities. Despite Colorado’s highly educated population, with 62.9% of the population holding some form of postsecondary credential, the state ranks among the lowest nationally in high school graduation rates. While Colorado generally fares well in educational attainment and literacy rates compared to other states, recent data from the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies estimates that about 17% of Colorado adults struggle with print material usage and comprehension, highlighting ongoing challenges.

The phenomenon of having a highly educated population, yet poor student outcomes is known as the “Colorado Paradox”. This reflects a broader demographic shift, where highly educated workers relocate to Colorado, rather than reflecting the effectiveness of the state’s education system in preparing students for the workforce. Moreover, Colorado faces a pressing need for postsecondary educational attainment, ranking third in the nation for the percentage of jobs requiring some postsecondary education by 2023, and is projected to lead in the demand for bachelor’s degrees by 2031. As such, it is imperative to equip Colorado students with the skills for college and career readiness to secure these jobs, preventing them from being lost to out-of-state workers.

The connection between a highly educated population and poor student outcomes is intertwined with early childhood challenges that hinder children from reaching their full potential. In Colorado, over 12% of children live in poverty, with 28% in families earning below 200% of the federal poverty threshold. Poverty rates vary significantly by geographic region, with the southern part of the state experiencing rates as high as 36%. Additionally, approximately 17,894 children served in the McKinney Vento programs for homelessness and around 1,100 children under age 18 in foster care face an elevated risk of school failure. Additional factors negatively influencing early childhood development and educational outcomes include lack of access to quality early childhood education, inaccessible healthcare, challenges related to language barriers and cultural differences, inadequate instruction, and scarce access to appropriate services for disabilities such as dyslexia.

State Needs Assessment and External Evaluation

The State Needs Assessment driving literacy initiatives in Colorado was last conducted and updated in 2021 as part of the 2020 CLSD grant project. The primary findings of the Needs Assessment found below were drawn from student literacy data, stakeholder feedback, and current reading research.

- **Systems and Sustainability**

There is a critical need to build leadership capacity in literacy and facilitate the development of district-wide comprehensive literacy plans. There is the need and desire for a unified voice on literacy matters, clarity for literacy beyond the third grade, and the establishment of robust support systems for struggling readers both inside and outside the classroom.

- **Developing and Supporting a High-Quality Workforce**

There is an urgent need for comprehensive professional development for educators and leaders across all levels, focusing on essential areas such as the science of reading instruction, writing pedagogy, language development, support for diverse learners, and data-driven differentiation strategies from preK-12. Additionally, collaboration with institutions of higher education is crucial to enhance the preparation of preservice teachers in these domains. Teacher retention remains a persistent challenge, underscoring the necessity to foster collective self-efficacy among educators and instill confidence in their ability to address the needs of all students.

- **MTSS and Data-Driven Decision Making**

PK-12 leaders seek robust models and frameworks to bolster MTSS both pre and post K-3, alongside a clarified definition of literacy spanning ELA and other disciplines. Strengthening Universal Tier 1 instruction is imperative to ensure consistent, comprehensive curriculum delivery, with differentiation strategies informed by data across Tiers 1, 2, and 3. There is a need to set high expectations for all students, including those from diverse backgrounds, fostering self-efficacy. Additionally, creating safe, inclusive learning environments that promote collaboration and belonging is essential.

- **Multilingual Learners**

Colorado requires streamlined procedures and robust support mechanisms to guide educators in identifying significant reading deficiencies (SRDs) among students who are Not English Proficient (NEP) and Limited English Proficient (LEP). There is a great need for a more thorough understanding of language development and how it relates to learning to read.

- **Learners with Disabilities and Learners of Traditionally Underserved Populations**

Comprehensive understanding and support are essential for addressing the diverse literacy needs of students across Colorado. This includes equipping educators with the knowledge and tools to effectively teach reading and writing to all students, particularly underserved populations and those with reading disabilities like dyslexia. Furthermore, there is a need for clear guidance and resources at both the state and local levels to ensure consistent screening, identification, and intervention practices for students with dyslexia. Collaborative efforts between educators, policymakers, and stakeholders are vital to develop and implement evidence-based strategies that promote literacy success for all learners, fostering equitable outcomes across the state.

- **Family and Community**

There is a pressing need to empower families with resources, guidance, and support to foster optimal learning environments at home, promoting positive outcomes for students from preschool through high school.

Many of these same findings were echoed in an independent evaluation of the Colorado READ Act. A key finding in the independent evaluation report indicates a return to pre-pandemic achievement levels for some students, but those with multiple identifications remain underserved. While fewer students were identified as having an SRD and more exited from SRD status in 2021–2022, CMAS proficiency remains low for students with SRD



history. LEAs reported the need for additional resources to support continued interventions in grades 4-12 for students who do not exit READ Plans at the end of third grade since these students will need additional support to reach grade level proficiency.

Student Assessment Results

The assessment results reveal both positive trends and persistent disparities among disadvantaged subgroups in Colorado's educational landscape. These disparities underscore the ongoing challenges in achieving educational equity.

- **NAEP Data**

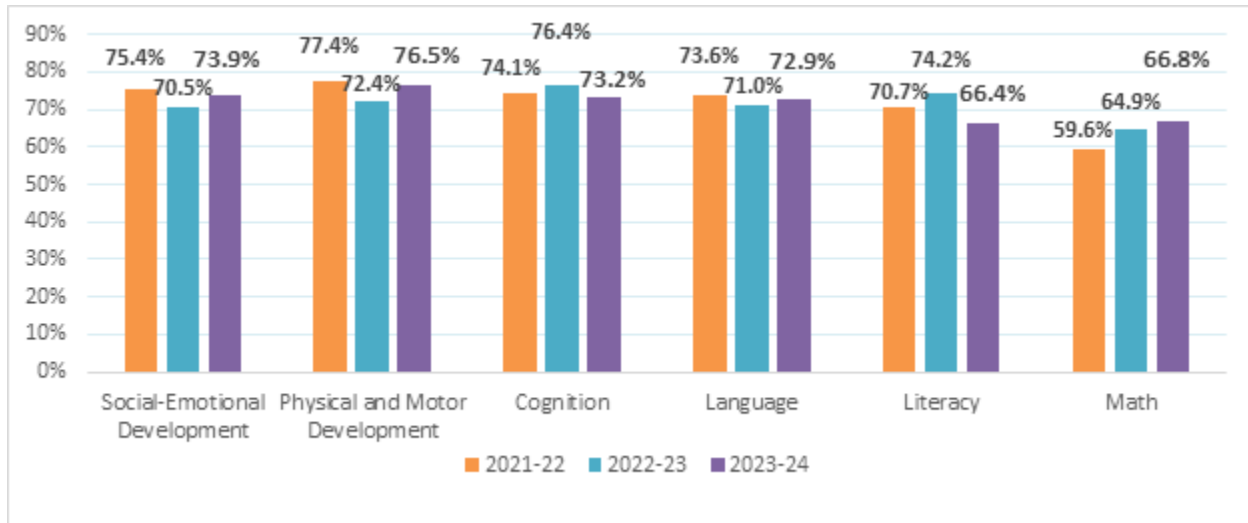
In 2022, Colorado's students outperformed the national average in reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). However, lower reading scores in fourth and eighth grades were observed in 2022 compared to 2019, echoing national trends attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this, there are positive signs of improvement in state-level tests. The percentage of students performing at or above the NAEP Proficient level (38%) remained consistent with 2019 (38%), showing an increase from 1998 (33%).

Despite overall progress, disparities persist, particularly influenced by race and socioeconomic status. Students receiving free or reduced-price lunch are 20% less likely to enroll in college compared to their non-eligible peers. Only about 35% of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch enroll in college. Disparities among disadvantaged subgroups are evident in early literacy data and persist as students progress through grade levels. In 2022, Black students scored an average of 31 points lower than white students, while Hispanic students scored 30 points lower on average. Additionally, English language learners in Colorado scored 42 points lower on average than non-English language learners. Similarly, students receiving free or reduced-price lunch demonstrated a performance gap of 32 points lower than those not eligible for the program.

- **Birth to Kindergarten Entry Data**

In 2008, Colorado enacted S.B. 08-212, or CAP4K, to align education from preschool to postsecondary levels for student success in college and careers. Under CAP4K, local education providers must administer state board-approved kindergarten readiness assessments and ensure that all publicly funded kindergarten students receive an Individual School Readiness Plan. Due to reporting changes in 2020 and the pause in reporting kindergarten school readiness data in 2020-2021, annual data is only available from 2021-22 through 2023-24, revealing steady trends in language and literacy but also disparities among subgroups.

Percentage of Kindergartners Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Expectations

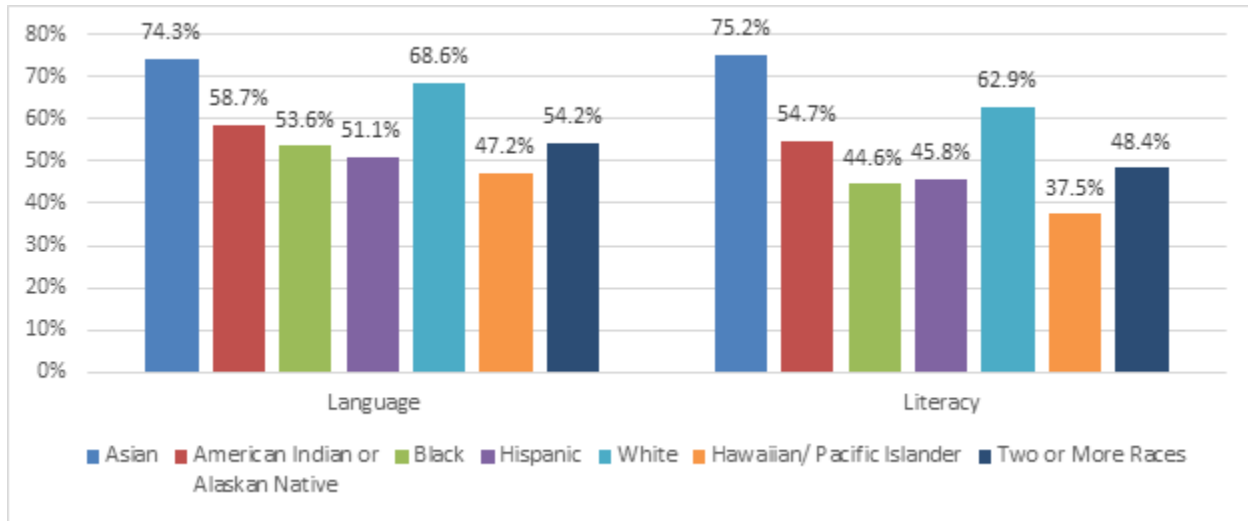


The data shows disparities in meeting or exceeding school readiness domains among kindergartners based on Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL) eligibility. In both the language and literacy domains, fewer FRL-eligible students met expectations.

Kindergartners Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains			
	FRL Eligible	FRL Not Eligible	FRL Unknown
Language	9,745	14,720	11,845
Literacy	8,415	12,697	11,947

Additionally, there are notable performance disparities among racial/ethnic subgroups. Recent studies suggest that while there's a clear connection between racial and ethnic factors and academic disparities, the primary determinant is the socioeconomic status of students' families. In America, it's necessary to examine data on race/ethnic groups and socioeconomic status concurrently as they are deeply intertwined due to complex and interconnected factors.

Kindergarteners by Race/Ethnicity Meeting or Exceeding School Readiness Domains

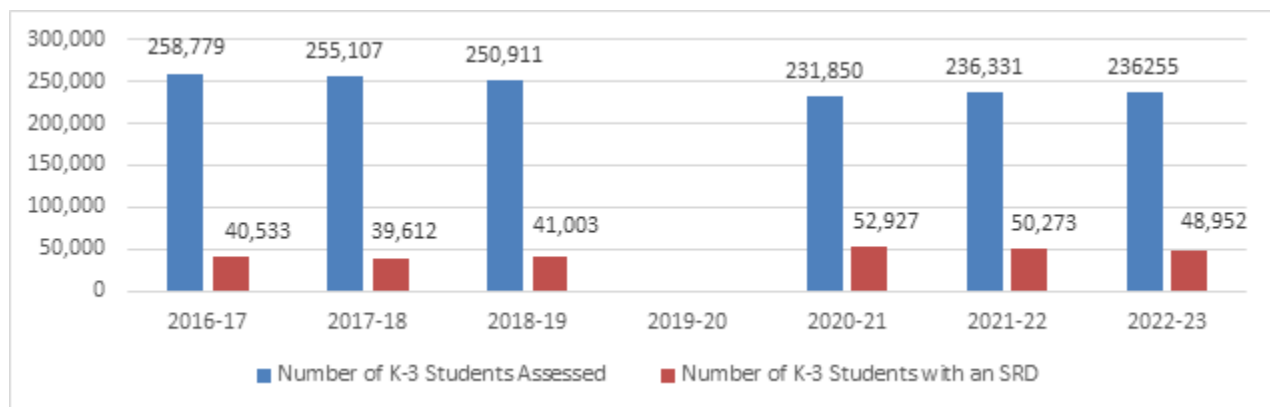


Collaboration within and among schools, families, and community services enhances school readiness for all children. The CLSD project plan includes provisions for further collaborative efforts.

- READ Act Data: K-3 Focus**

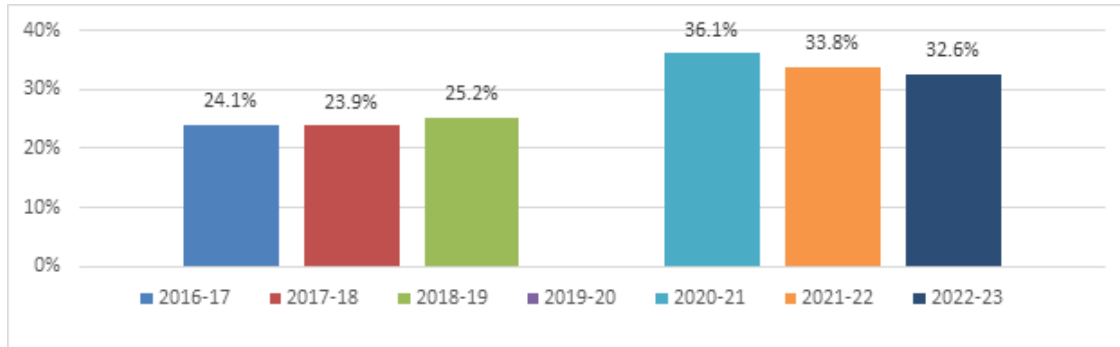
The READ Act, established by the Colorado State Legislature in 2012, aims to ensure that all students read at grade level by the end of third grade. It has evolved through continuous improvement and legislative updates to improve statewide support for students, teachers, and schools. Districts in Colorado annually report the number of K-3 students with significant reading deficiencies (SRDs), which indicates not meeting the minimum skill levels for reading proficiency by the end of the school year. In the 2022-23 spring assessment period, 48,952 students (20.7%) were identified as having an SRD, continuing the positive trend of declining SRD rates since the 2020-21 school year.

Longitudinal SRD Rates from 2016/17 to 2022/23



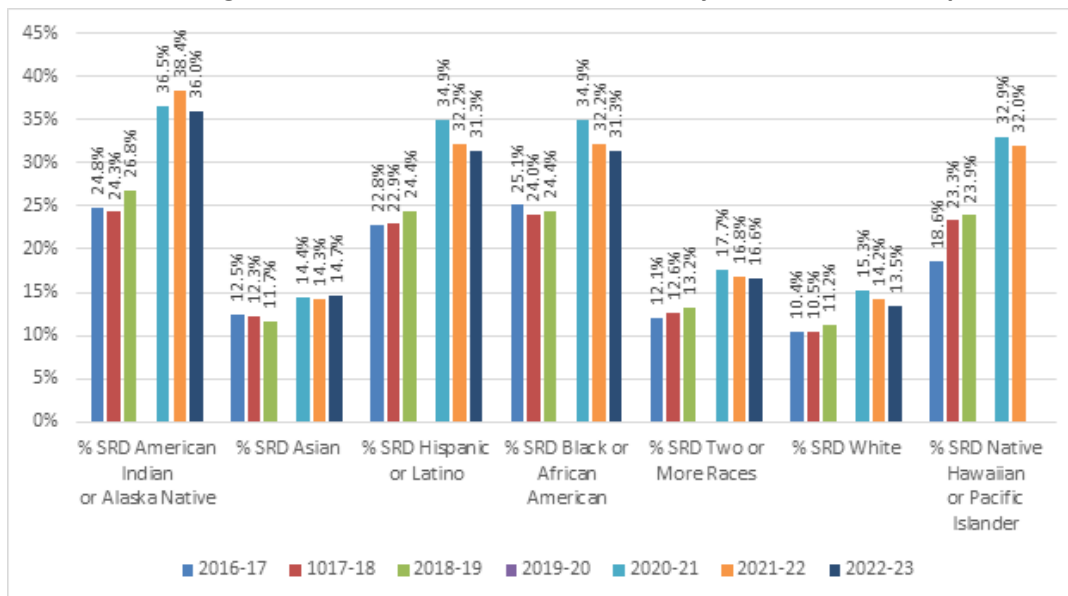
Longitudinal SRD rates for Colorado's K-3 students mirror trends found in the NAEP data, with rates increasing since 2019 but gradually declining. READ Act data reinforces the concerns regarding racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps highlighted in NAEP results. In 2022-23, the SRD rate for students eligible for free or reduced lunch was 32.6%, a slight decrease from the previous year but still elevated compared to pre-COVID data and significantly higher than rates for students not eligible for free or reduced lunch.

Percentage of K-3 Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch Identified with SRD



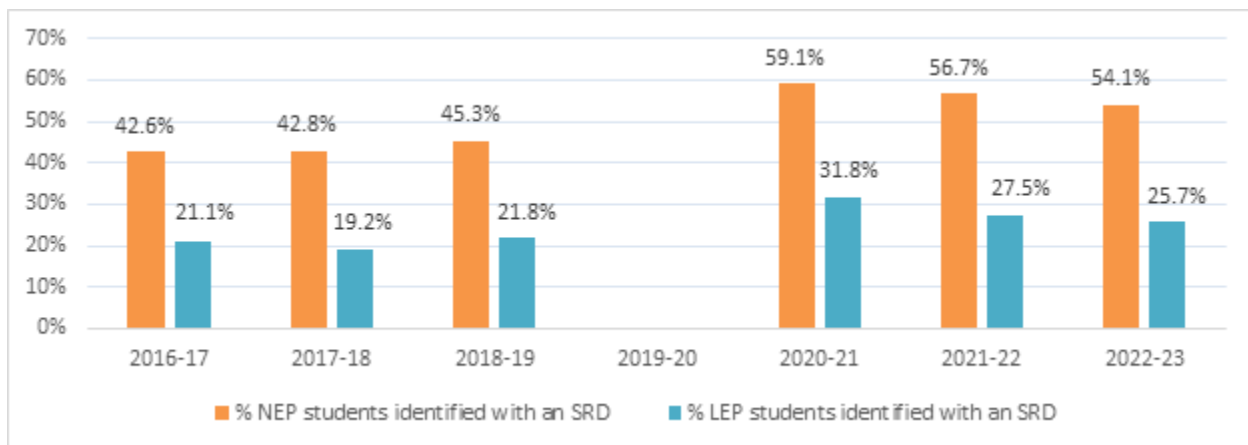
In 2022-23, the highest SRD rates persisted among certain racial and ethnic groups, consistent with trends over the past seven years. American Indian or Alaska Native students had the highest SRD rate at 36.0%, followed by Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (34.5%), Hispanic or Latino (31.3%), Black or African American (29.1%), and Two or More Races (16.6%). Asian and white students had the lowest rates at 14.7% and 13.5%, respectively. While SRD rates decreased slightly for most groups compared to the previous year, Asian and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students saw no change in rates.

Percentage of Students Identified with an SRD by Racial/Ethnic Groups



Multilingual learners face some distinct reading challenges, as they often learn to read while simultaneously acquiring a new language. In Colorado, English learners are categorized as Non-English Proficient (NEP) or Limited English Proficient (LEP). Statewide access to language development classes is inconsistent and is limited for some learners, impacting their reading development. K-3 NEP students have significantly higher rates of Significant Reading Deficiency (SRD) identification compared to LEP peers. In 2022-23, NEP students had an SRD rate of 54.1%, while LEP students had a rate of 25.7%. These rates, though lower than last year, remain elevated compared to pre-COVID years.

Percentage of K-3 Multilingual Learners Identified with an SRD

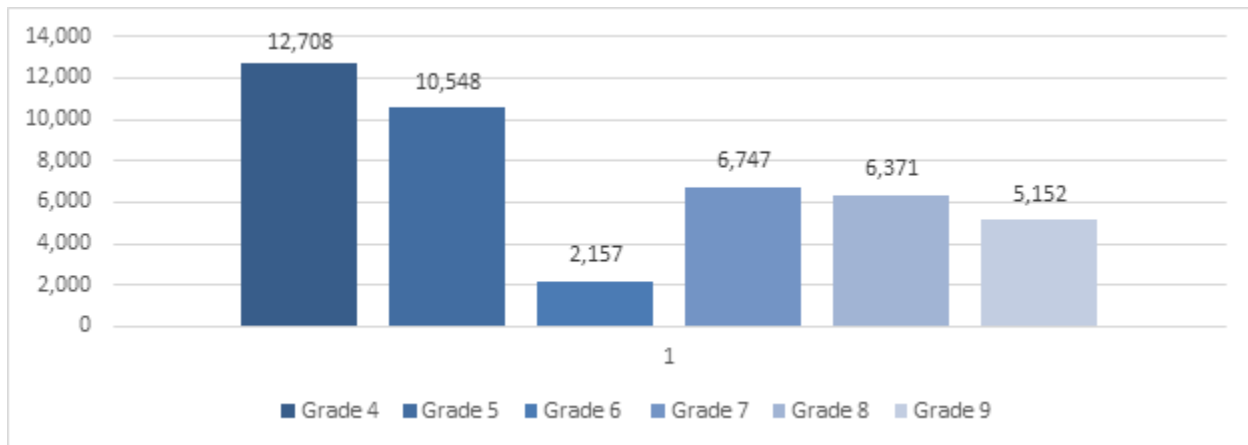


The multilingual learner achievement gap extends beyond K-3 as demonstrated in NAEP and 4-12 data. Additional opportunities for comprehensive training on reading and writing instruction, emphasizing oral and home language development are essential in closing these gaps. This includes specialized knowledge in teaching multilingual learners and students speaking variant dialects at home. Teachers need to know how to provide support to students in developing proficiency in language, reading, and writing—in English and in students’ home languages. Teachers also require information on assessing linguistically diverse learners and determining reading deficits separate from English language proficiency.

- 4th - 12th Grade Data**

Annual READ data shows that over 43,000 students in grades 4-12 remain on a READ plan. However, the CDE views these SRD figures as incomplete due to the lack of authority to require districts and schools to identify and report new students with SRDs beyond the 3rd grade. Data collection for grades 4-12 relies on state assessments such as CMAS and PSAT/SAT. Many students who fail to achieve proficiency on these state assessments do not receive support covered by the READ Act. To support these secondary students, improved infrastructure, systems, and guidance are needed.

Number of Students Who Remain on READ Plans by Grade Level



** Grade 6 students, who would have been in third grade in 2019-20, missed the opportunity to be identified in third grade due to COVID-related cancellations. As a result, they were only identified in their second grade or earlier.

Additional focus is needed for students in fourth grade and beyond, specifically addressing the impacts of COVID-19 through evidence-based instruction, intervention, and high-dosage tutoring. This includes enhancing literacy professional development opportunities for educators, covering topics such as identifying struggling students, understanding dyslexia, literacy instruction for multilingual students, differentiation and support for students with disabilities, educational transitions and alignment, and integrating disciplinary literacy.

The highlighted achievement gaps in reading data and the persistent need for intervention beyond third grade indicate an obligation to allocate additional resources and cultivate a deeper understanding of reading disabilities. The Dyslexia Working Group, formed in 2019, strives to improve screening, identification, and support for dyslexia. This group analyzes data to formulate statewide plans, recommend screening tools, and develop educator training programs. Their annual reports provide key recommendations, which have included proposed amendments to the READ Act, improvements to dyslexia screening, and increasing teacher awareness. Implementing these recommendations at the school and district levels is essential to guaranteeing effective literacy instruction and support, benefiting all students, including those with dyslexia.

Educator Workforce

The COVID-19 pandemic intensified existing challenges in education, leading to significant job losses and exacerbating teacher shortages. Between February and May 2020, the U.S. lost 9% of public education jobs, including thousands in Colorado. Since 2019, the state's teacher workforce has declined by over 4,600 educators. Schools continue to struggle with absenteeism, mental health challenges, and high turnover, making it difficult to recruit and retain high-quality educators. To address this, Colorado is investing in incentives and strengthening educator preparation programs (EPPs), both traditional and alternative, to build a skilled and sustainable teaching workforce. Despite workforce challenges, there are bright spots in the Colorado educator landscape. According to a report by the National Council on Teacher Quality, Colorado is the top state in the



nation for how its teacher preparation programs train aspiring educators to teach children to read. Educator Effectiveness Metrics reflect overall effectiveness with room to grow a more highly effective educator workforce.

- **[Educator Preparation Programs Report](#)**
The Colorado Educator Preparation Programs report (EPP Report) provides information about the effectiveness of programs that train teachers, principals and special services providers in our state. According to the most recent EPP Report, overall enrollment in Colorado educator preparation programs has decreased. The pool of educators continues to be predominately white and female. Teacher shortage areas identified as statewide needs include special education, mathematics, science, world languages, and early childhood education.
- **[Educator Effectiveness](#)**
The Educator Effectiveness Metrics, released annually, reflect performance evaluation ratings for teachers and principals for the most recent years for which CDE has data. In 2023-2024, 63.8% of Colorado educators were rated as effective and 32.6% were rated as highly effective. Only 3.6% of teachers were rated as partially ineffective and ineffective.
- **[Educator Shortage Survey](#)**
The Educator Shortage Report for 2023–2024 estimated that over 8,000 teaching and special services positions needed to be filled. This represents about 12% of teaching positions and 15% of special service positions.

Additional Critical Areas of Need

As Colorado's educational landscape evolves, there may be a need to address the following areas of need.

- **Rural Districts**
In Colorado, rural districts typically have fewer than 6,500 students, with small rural districts having less than 1,000, constituting 82% of school districts in the state. These districts often grapple with funding challenges, hindering their ability to offer essential services like after-school activities and tutoring. Rural communities in Colorado share commonalities with those nationwide, including concentrated poverty, limited access to resources such as school psychologists and broadband internet, and challenges in recruiting and retaining educators. Many of these districts in Colorado are part of a Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), which provides educational services to multiple districts. This collaboration proves financially beneficial in light of limited resources, offering a cost-effective way to share administrative and student services. It reduces expenses while guaranteeing access to a wider array of programs and resources. The project plan includes strategies to guarantee fair opportunities for participation which includes application and project support for interested rural districts and BOCES.

- **Influx of Newcomer Population in 2024**

In December 2023, the U.S. Border Patrol recorded a record-high of nearly 250,000 encounters with migrants crossing from Mexico into the United States, surpassing the previous peak of about 224,000 in May 2022. This influx significantly impacted Colorado, with Denver receiving nearly 40,000 migrants in January 2024, the highest per capita in the nation. Denver Public Schools saw over 3,000 new student registrations, primarily migrant children, leading to staffing challenges and an \$18 million budget shortfall due to delayed funding.

The mass influx of newcomers has not only affected major cities like Denver but also smaller communities such as Carbondale, located outside of Aspen. With over 125 individuals arriving in a few weeks, Carbondale's population of 7,000 witnessed a staggering 500% increase in homelessness. This highlights the imperative for improved literacy services and support tailored to newcomer students across the state. Prioritizing these initiatives ensures equitable access to appropriate and effective instruction, thereby enabling newcomer students to thrive. Investing in targeted resources and programs will aid in efforts to address the Colorado Paradox, fostering the success of these students and enriching Colorado's educational landscape.

- **Chronic Absenteeism**

Another key strategy for ensuring students receive comprehensive literacy instruction is making sure they are in class to learn all essential skills. Last school year, more than 1 in 4 Colorado students were chronically absent, meaning they missed more than 10% of school days. Chronic absenteeism has increased each year since 2019-2020, before the pandemic. Students who are chronically absent are less likely to read on grade level by third grade and are at greater risk of dropping out. Even excused absences count toward chronic absenteeism, and missing just a few days each month can add up quickly. Addressing chronic absenteeism ensures that students can benefit from system-level improvements in schools and districts.



State Literacy Goals

Birth - Kindergarten Entry Goals

- By 2029, the percentage of children prepared for kindergarten ready to read increases 25% as measured by end of year Kindergarten READ Act data.

Kindergarten - 5th Grade Goals

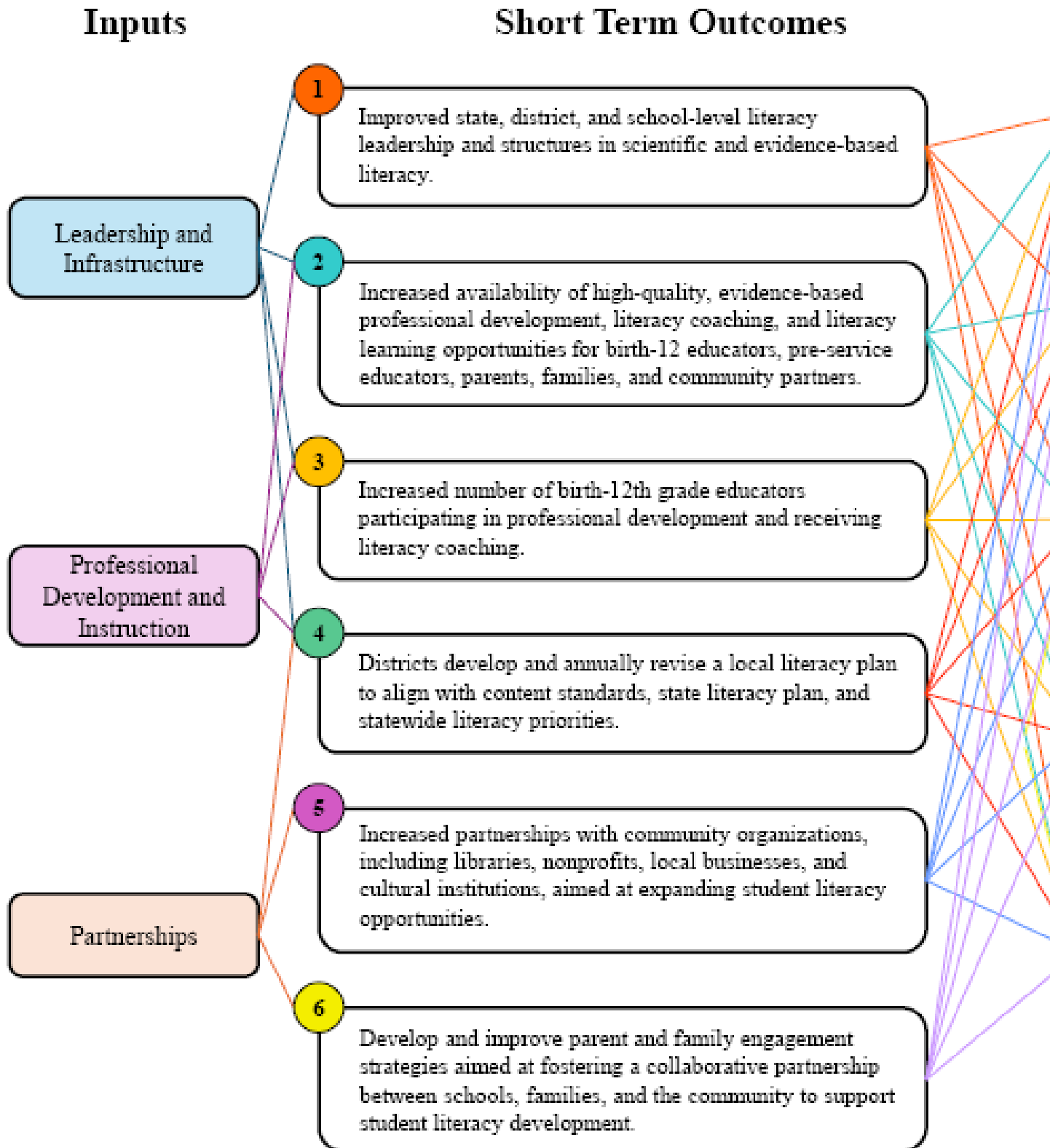
- By 2029, the percentage of students in grades K-3 identified as having a significant reading deficiency (SRD) measured by READ Act interim assessment will decrease by 10%.
- By 2029, the percentage of students in grades 4-5 achieving proficiency increases 20% as measured by the state English language arts/literacy CMAS assessment.

6th - 12th Grade Goals

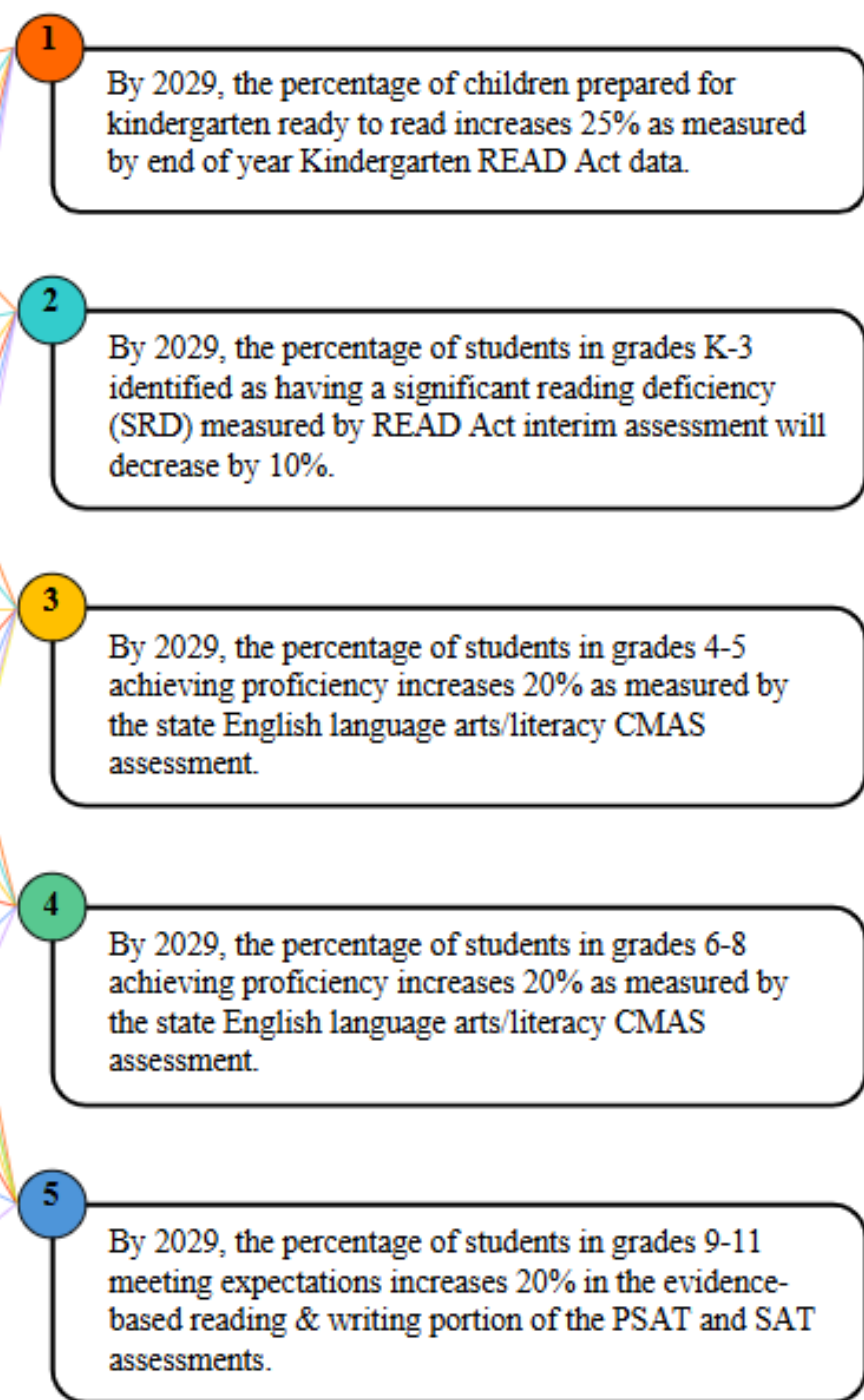
- By 2029, the percentage of students in grades 6-8 achieving proficiency increases 20% as measured by the state English language arts/literacy CMAS assessment.
- By 2029, the percentage of students in grades 9-11 meeting expectations increases 20% in the evidence-based reading & writing portion of the PSAT and SAT assessments.



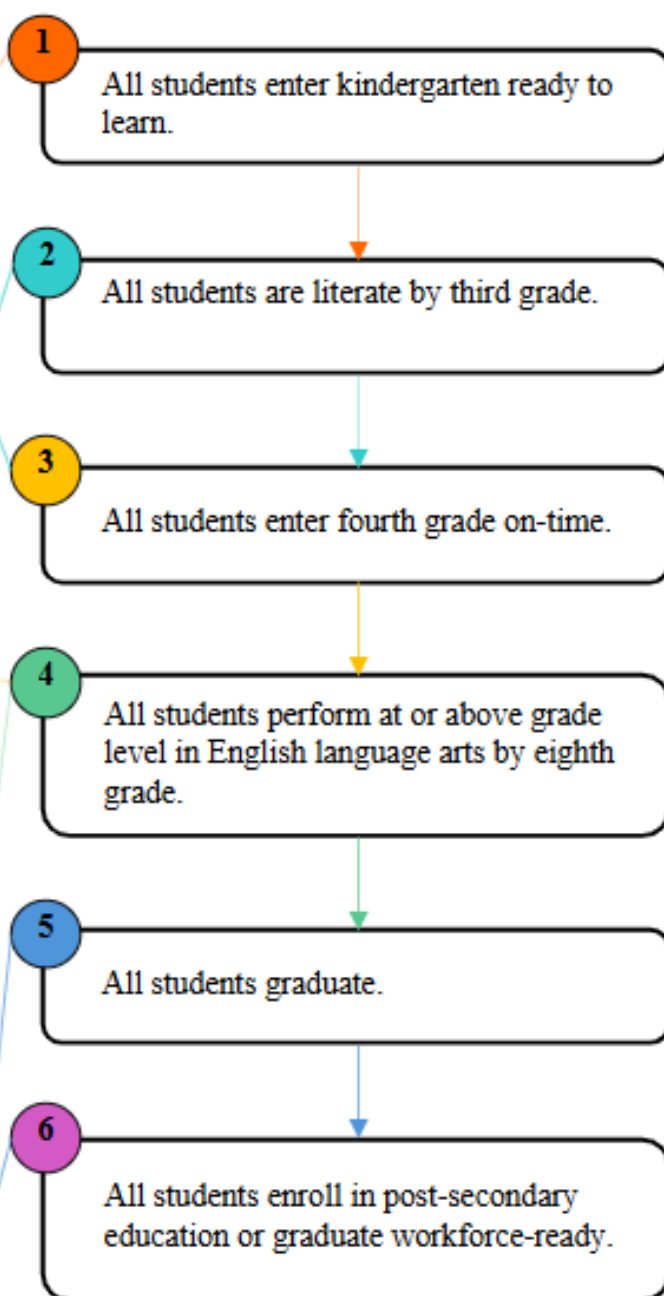
Logic Model



Intermediate Outcomes



Long Term Outcomes



Logic Model



Core Components for Successful Literacy Instruction

The following section outlines the core components essential for successful literacy instruction. This approach respects local control, offering districts the flexibility to align with state standards while making district-specific adaptations. It avoids mandating specific materials or assessments, instead encouraging districts to align to current research and make data-informed decisions that best meet their students' needs.

Colorado Academic Standards for All Students

The [Colorado Academic Standards](#) are the foundation for teaching and learning. They provide clear goals that outline what students should know, understand, and be able to do at the end of each grade level or span. These standards help teachers ensure their students build the necessary skills, knowledge, and understanding for postsecondary readiness.

To support students in meeting these goals, it is essential for teachers to be standards-literate. This means teachers must have a working knowledge of the terms and categories that structure the standards, apply the standards effectively to develop and revise curriculum, and demonstrate best, first instruction using high-impact strategies aligned with the standards.

[Extended Evidence Outcomes](#) (EEOs) were developed specifically for students identified with significant cognitive disabilities. These standards, applicable to all grades, need to be clear and rigorous to ensure that the public education system equips all students with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to succeed in postsecondary settings and the workforce, become well-informed and responsible citizens, and lead fulfilling lives.

Access to High-Quality Instructional Materials

Access to high-quality instructional materials is essential for effective literacy instruction and student achievement. High-quality materials provide a strong foundation for teaching by aligning with state standards, supporting evidence-based practices, and ensuring consistency across classrooms. These materials help teachers deliver engaging, structured lessons that promote critical reading and comprehension skills for all students, including multilingual learners and those with language-based learning disabilities.

Efforts should be made to ensure that teachers do not need to create their own instructional materials. When teachers are provided with comprehensive, research-backed resources, they can focus on delivering effective instruction rather than spending time developing materials from scratch. This approach not only supports consistency and alignment with best practices but also allows teachers to dedicate more time to refining instructional strategies and responding to student needs. Districts should prioritize investing in proven materials and training educators to use them effectively, fostering an equitable and supportive learning environment for all students.



Best, First Instruction and Tiers of Instruction

Best, first instruction (BFI) is the cornerstone of a successful literacy framework and can be understood as a comprehensive approach that combines culturally responsive teaching, practice-based teacher learning, and the implementation of high-quality academic standards and curriculum. BFI ensures that the initial instruction is impactful and meets the needs of all students without relying on supplemental interventions.

Best, first Instruction should:

- **Meet the Needs of All Students:** Provide instruction that is accessible, equitable, and flexible to support the diverse needs of all students. This means designing lessons that address the sensory, cognitive, and language needs of each child, ensuring inclusivity and engagement.
- **Build Relationships:** Foster student agency by creating caring, positive, and authentic connections with peers and adults. Strong relationships help motivate and support students in their learning journeys.
- **Create Relevancy:** Engage students with instruction that is authentic, meaningful, and connected to real-world experiences. Relevance enhances student interest and participation, making learning more impactful.
- **Foster Disciplinary Literacy:** Equip students to read, write, think critically, and communicate like experts within various content areas. This prepares them for deeper understanding and application across different subjects.

BFI serves as the foundation of a multi-tiered system of instruction. In this system:

- **Tier 1** instruction includes the core instructional programs and strategies provided in the general education setting, emphasizing best, first instruction (BFI) for all students. It emphasizes high-quality, evidence-based teaching practices to meet diverse learning needs, with ongoing professional development for teachers and year-round assessments to monitor student progress. Most students (80%-85%) benefit from core instruction alone when delivered by a teacher skilled in research-based practices and using high-quality materials.
- **Tier 2** involves targeted small-group interventions for students who need additional support to reach grade-level proficiency. It serves 10%-15% of students who require more than Tier 1 instruction. This tier emphasizes additional explicit instruction, focused practice, and increased opportunities to review skills throughout the day.
- **Tier 3** provides individualized, intensive instruction for students with more significant learning challenges. It involves customized instruction beyond Tier 1 and Tier 2, typically in small groups or one-on-one settings. Around 5% of students may require this level of support, even with adequate Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction. This tier focuses on essential skills, along with carefully selected grade-level objectives, providing explicit instruction, focused practice, and increased opportunities for skill review throughout the day.



By implementing BFI within a structured, tiered instructional model, schools can create an environment where high-quality instruction is the standard and all students have the opportunity to develop strong literacy skills.

Scientifically and Evidence-Based Strategies and Practices

Effective tiers of instruction require the use of scientifically and evidence-based strategies, which are essential for improving student outcomes and closing achievement gaps. Evidence in education is continually evolving and expanding. Driven by growing K-12 research and requirements in federal education law, specifically the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), use of evidence-based practices among teachers, school leaders, and district personnel has become standard practice. ESSA defines evidence-based interventions as those that show a statistically significant impact on student outcomes.

The Science of Teaching Reading (SOTR) integrates research from various fields, including psychology, neurology, and linguistics, to understand how the brain learns to read. SOTR goes beyond foundational skills such as phonemic awareness and phonics, incorporating all language elements (e.g., phonology, morphology, syntax) and considering how reading skills develop over time.

Key models and strategies underpinning Colorado's literacy plan include evidence-based approaches grounded in scientific research that emphasize the development of both foundational word recognition skills and comprehension skills. These are essential for reading words on the page and connecting them to meaning and authorial intent. Core models and strategies include Chall's Stages of Reading Development, the Gradual Release Model, Scarborough's Reading Rope, Sedita's Writing Rope, and the Simple View of Reading. Detailed explanations of these foundational models are available in the Appendices section.

Oral Language

Word meanings develop quickly from birth through adolescence through communicative relationships with parents, teachers, peers, and community members. These interactions shape speech habits and language knowledge, supporting higher mental functions unique to humans. Oral language fosters logical thinking, critical thinking, reasoning, information literacy, collaboration, self-direction, and creativity. In Colorado, students build oral language skills in listening and speaking, while mastering reading and writing. Holding students accountable for language mastery based on research in linguistics, cognitive psychology, human information processing, and socio-cultural perspectives ensures they develop 21st-century skills to benefit the state, region, and nation.

Find below the key details on student oral language skill goals and the related instructional practices needed to meet these goals.

Oral Language Goal 1		
Students can collaborate effectively as group members or leaders by actively listening, asking thoughtful questions, respecting others' ideas, and contributing their own ideas to help the group achieve its objective.		
Grade Level	Related Academic Standard	Grade Level Expectations
Eleventh/Twelfth Grade	RWC-GR.11-12-S.1-GLE.1	Engage effectively in discussions by preparing, contributing clear ideas, fostering inclusive dialogue, and evaluating diverse



Ninth/Tenth Grade	RWC-GR.9-10-S.1-GLE.1	Respond to others' ideas and evaluate perspective and rhetoric.
Eighth Grade	RWC-GR.8-S.1-GLE.1	Engage in effective collaborative discussions and analyze the information presented.
Seventh Grade	RWC-GR.7-S.1-GLE.1	Engage in collaborative discussions by preparing and using effective communication strategies.
Sixth Grade	RWC-GR.6-S.1-GLE.1	Employ appropriate collaboration and communication strategies to meet the needs of a given task and purpose.
Fifth Grade	RWC-GR.2-S.1-GLE.1	Collaborate effectively in discussions for diverse purposes and situations.
Fourth Grade	RWC-GR.2-S.1-GLE.1	Pose thoughtful questions after actively listening to others.
Third Grade	RWC-GR.2-S.1-GLE.1-2	Participate cooperatively in group activities and communicate effectively using appropriate language in both informal and formal situations.
Second Grade	RWC-GR.2-S.1-GLE.1-2	Engage in dialogue, learn new information through active listening, stay focused on the topic, and be prepared to discuss.
First Grade	RWC-GR.1-S.1-GLE.1-2	Communicate effectively using verbal and nonverbal language, employing multiple strategies to express and receive information and expand oral communication.
Kindergarten	RWC-GR.K.S.1-GLE.1-2	Communicate using verbal and nonverbal language while developing oral communication skills in a language-rich environment.
Preschool	RWC-GR.PK-S.1-GLE.1--2	Comprehend and understand the English language (Receptive Language) and use it to convey thoughts and feelings (Expressive Language).

Oral Language Goal 2		
Students are able to deliver organized and effective oral presentations for varied audiences and purposes.		
Grade Level	Related Academic Standard	Grade Level Expectations
Eleventh/Twelfth Grade	RWC-GR.11-12-S.1-GLE.2	Respond to others' ideas by assessing their perspective and reasoning.
Ninth/Tenth Grade	RWC-GR.9-10-S.1-GLE.2	Organize and develop credible presentations tailored to purpose and audience.
Eighth Grade	RWC-GR.8-S.1-GLE.2	Design organized presentations incorporating key details and claims while tailored for purpose and audience.
Seventh Grade	RWC-GR.7-S.1-GLE.2	Prepare for formal presentations and use appropriate delivery techniques.
Sixth Grade	RWC-GR.6-S.1-GLE.2	Develop, organize, and present ideas and opinions effectively.



Fifth Grade	RWC-GR.5-S.1-GLE.2	Present to express an opinion, persuade, or explain/provide information.
Fourth Grade	RWC-GR.4-S.1-GLE.2	Create a plan to present information both informally and formally effectively.
Third Grade	RWC-GR.3-S.1-GLE.2	Communicate effectively using appropriate language in both informal and formal situations.
Second Grade	RWC-GR.2-S.1-GLE.2	Deliver presentations while maintaining focus on topic and be prepared to discuss.
First Grade	RWC-GR.1-S.1-GLE.2	Use multiple strategies to develop and expand oral communication.
Kindergarten	RWC-GR.K-S.1-GLE.2	Develop oral communication skills through a language-rich environment.
Preschool	RWC-GR.PK-S.1-GLE.2	Use language to convey thoughts and feelings (Expressive Language).

Key Instructional Oral Language Practices

Intentionally plan activities to build vocabulary and language.
Use rich, interactive read-alouds and storytelling.
Use shared book reading to develop language and knowledge of the world.
Nurture structured discussions to develop oral language and communication skills.
Incorporate spoken language activities to broaden vocabulary, build simple and complex sentences, and refine grammar usage.
Model and guide expressive language skills by demonstrating and supporting sentence-building through prompts and feedback.
Provide English language development instruction for students identified as Limited English Proficient or Not English Proficient focusing on listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.
Teach active listening through activities focusing on identifying key ideas, asking clarifying questions, and summarizing.
Incorporate oral presentation instruction and activities with teacher feedback and self-evaluation.
Assess oral language skills through both formal methods, like presentations and tests, and informal methods, such as observations and conversations, to monitor progress and guide instruction.
Collaborate with school professionals such as ELD teachers, special education teachers, and speech-language pathologists to support and enhance students' oral language development through targeted interventions and strategies.

Phonological and Phonemic Awareness

Phonological awareness skills are a critical component of foundational word recognition, serving as the building blocks for successful reading development. These skills involve the ability to recognize and manipulate sounds in spoken language, including syllables, rhymes, and individual phonemes. Children who begin school with little phonological awareness have difficulty acquiring alphabetic coding skills and therefore, have difficulty recognizing words (Stanovich, 2000). Research demonstrates that strong phonemic awareness is essential for decoding words, as it enables students to connect spoken sounds to written symbols.

Phonological awareness instruction typically occurs during the critical early years of pre-kindergarten through second grade, as this is when children are developing essential skills for reading and writing. During these years, students learn to recognize and manipulate sounds in language, such as rhyming, blending, segmenting, and identifying individual phonemes. However, phonological awareness is not limited to young learners. For older students who have gaps in these foundational skills, targeted phonological awareness instruction is necessary to ensure they can effectively decode and comprehend text. Addressing these gaps will help struggling readers catch up and build the necessary skills for academic success.

Find below the key details on student phonological and phoneme skill goals and the related instructional practices needed to meet these goals.

Phonological and Phonemic Awareness Goal 1 Students develop full phonemic awareness, enabling them to automatically apply these skills to decode words fluently.		
Grade Level	Related Academic Standard	Grade Level Expectations
Sixth - Twelfth Grade	RWC-GR.6-12-S.2-GLE.3	Read and spell complex words, understand vocabulary through morphemes (prefixes, suffixes, roots), and improve fluency, while also applying these skills to learn vocabulary from other languages and/or in the process of acquiring new languages.
Third – Fifth Grade	RWC-GR.3-5-S.2-GLE.3	Decode and spell multisyllabic words, recognize word parts (prefixes, suffixes, roots), and read fluently in grade-level texts.
Second Grade	RWC-GR.2-S.2-GLE.3	Apply knowledge of complex spelling patterns (orthography) and word meanings (morphology) to decode words with accuracy.
First Grade	RWC-GR.1-S.2-GLE.3	Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes) by distinguishing long and short vowel sounds, blending sounds to form single-syllable words, isolating initial, medial, and final sounds, and segmenting spoken single-syllable words into their individual phonemes.



Kindergarten	RWC-GR.K-S.2-GLE.3	Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes) by recognizing and producing rhyming words, counting, pronouncing, blending, and segmenting syllables, blending and segmenting the onset and rime of single-syllable words, isolating and pronouncing initial, medial vowel, and final sounds in CVC words, and manipulating individual sounds to make new one-syllable words.
Preschool	RWC-GR.PK-S.2-GLE.2	Identify and discriminate between words, syllables, and phonemes in language, recognize beginning and ending sounds of words, identify words with similar sounds, and recognize sound patterns in songs, storytelling, and poetry through meaningful interactions.

Key Instructional Phonological Awareness Practices

Screen and continually assess phoneme awareness skills.
Deliver explicit phonemic awareness instruction with a clear scope and sequence.
Phoneme awareness instruction is integrated with letter instruction.
Engage in phonological sensitivity activities through songs, rhymes, and word play.
Engage students in activities for isolating and identifying sounds in spoken words.
Provide manipulatives or physical gestures for blending and segmenting sounds.
Instructional focus is blending and segmenting at the phoneme level.
Phonemic awareness activities are brief and engaging (10-20 minutes).
Limit the amount of time spent on oral-only phonemic awareness instruction.
Incorporate phonemic awareness using letters in reading and spelling instruction through activities such as phoneme-grapheme mapping.
Incorporate phonemic awareness into learning and applying complex spelling patterns and morphology.
Identify phonological similarities and differences when appropriate for students learning a new language or speaking a different language or dialect at home compared to the language of instruction.
Provide targeted differentiation and specific interventions for students identified as needing support with phonemic awareness skills.
Collaborate with school professionals such as ELD teachers, special education teachers, and speech-language pathologists to support students' phonemic awareness development through targeted interventions and strategies.

Phonics

Phonics instruction is a fundamental component of early literacy, focusing on the relationship between speech sounds (phonemes) and their corresponding letters or letter combinations (graphemes). While children are naturally predisposed to acquire language, the explicit teaching of sound-spelling connections is necessary for reading development. Phonics instruction extends beyond simple phoneme-grapheme matching to include more complex elements of the English language, such as multisyllabic word reading, spelling patterns, irregular words, and the study of morphology, Greek, and Latin roots. The alphabetic principle, alongside ongoing word study, is essential for fostering proficient readers and is a critical component of a comprehensive reading program.

Research shows that over 90% of students with severe reading difficulties struggle with processing phonological information (Blachman, 2000). However, with quality instruction, these deficits can be mitigated, leading to improved reading and writing outcomes. As students develop phonemic awareness and alphabet knowledge, they can simultaneously engage in phonics instruction to map speech to print. Phonics instruction, which is beneficial for all students, is most effective when it is systematic and explicit.

Find below the key details on student phonic skill goals and the related instructional practices needed to meet these goals.

Phonics Skill Goal 1 Students master phonics skills and gain a deep understanding of the structure of language, enabling them to effortlessly apply these skills to read and write with fluency and accuracy.		
Grade Level	Related Academic Standard	Grade Level Expectations
Sixth - Twelfth Grade	RWC-GR.6-12-S.2-GLE.3	Read and spell complex words, understand vocabulary through morphemes (prefixes, suffixes, roots), and improve fluency, while also applying these skills to learn vocabulary from other languages and/or in the process of acquiring new languages.
Third – Fifth Grade	RWC-GR.3-5-S.2-GLE.3	Decode and spell multisyllabic words, recognize word parts (prefixes, suffixes, roots), and read fluently in grade-level texts.
Second Grade	RWC-GR.2-S.2-GLE.3	Apply knowledge of complex spelling patterns (orthography) and word meanings (morphology) to decode grade-level texts accurately, including multisyllabic words, common prefixes and suffixes, less common spelling patterns, and grade-appropriate irregular words.
First Grade	RWC-GR.1-S.2-GLE.3	Apply previously taught phonics and word analysis skills to accurately and fluently decode words and passages, including consonant digraphs, closed syllables, open syllables, and final-e syllables. Students can determine syllables, decode two-syllable words with learned patterns, including inflectional endings, and recognize irregularly spelled words.



Kindergarten	RWC-GR.K-S.2-GLE.3	Demonstrate understanding of print organization and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills to decode words, including producing primary consonant sounds, associating long and short vowel sounds with common spellings, reading high-frequency words, and distinguishing between similarly spelled words by identifying differing letter sounds.
Preschool	RWC-GR.PK-S.2-GLE.2-4	Demonstrate phonological and early phonemic awareness, recognize letter names and sounds, and develop an understanding of print concepts to support early decoding skills.

Key Instructional Phonics Practices	Grade Level(s)
Screen and continually assess phonics skills.	PK-3
Deliver direct, explicit phonics instruction that follows a clear scope and sequence.	K-3
Explicitly teach phoneme-grapheme correspondences in a systematic sequence, reinforced through multisensory activities, guided practice, and application in reading and writing.	K-3
Instruct students to apply decoding skills as their primary strategy for reading unfamiliar words, discouraging guessing or skipping.	K-3
Use decodable books aligning with previously taught concepts during instruction.	K-2
Use intentional multisensory phonics techniques that integrate visual, auditory, and kinesthetic methods, such as teaching sound production, connecting phonemes to graphemes through writing while saying the sound, and using movements to blend words.	K-5
Incorporate explicit spelling instruction in every phonics lesson.	K-5
Incorporate phonemic awareness using letters in reading and spelling instruction through activities such as phoneme-grapheme mapping.	K-5
Incorporate phonemic awareness into learning and applying complex spelling patterns and morphology.	2-12
Analyze reading and spelling errors to distinguish between phonics mistakes and phonological mistakes and provide targeted interventions accordingly.	K-12
Teach students strategies to decode multisyllabic words by applying word analysis (phonics skills including syllable types and syllable division patterns) and structural analysis (morphological skills including recognizing prefixes, suffixes, and root words).	2-12
Identify orthographic similarities and differences when appropriate for students with reading and writing knowledge in another language compared to the language of instruction.	K-12
Provide explicit morphology instruction connecting to etymology and phonology.	2-12
Provide explicit morphology instruction as part of word reading skills and strategies.	2-12

Provide sufficient instruction and practice to support orthographic mapping and automatic word recognition through activities like phoneme-grapheme mapping, using a heart word routine for irregular words, and opportunities to apply learned skills in connected text.	K-3
Provide targeted differentiation and specific interventions for students identified as needing support with phonic and decoding skills.	K-12
Collaborate with school professionals such as ELD teachers, special education teachers, and speech-language pathologists to support students' phonemic awareness development through targeted interventions and strategies.	K-12

Fluency

Fluency bridges the gap between decoding words and comprehending text. It involves reading with appropriate speed, accuracy, and expression, enabling students to understand and engage with what they read. Fluent readers can focus on the meaning of the text rather than the mechanics of reading, which supports overall literacy development and academic success. Effective fluency instruction incorporates guided practice, modeling, and repeated readings to help students develop automaticity and confidence in their reading abilities.

A focus on independent reading time like Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) and Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) does not significantly enhance reading skills or fluency. Independent reading without sufficient skills can discourage struggling readers and hinder their enjoyment of reading. Fostering a love of reading begins with teaching students to read accurately and effortlessly through evidence-based practices. Additionally, creating opportunities for reading outside of instruction is essential. Collaborating with school and public librarians, encouraging reading at home, allowing choice in reading materials, and maintaining diverse, engaging book collections along with effective skill instruction help nurture a strong reading culture and positive reading habits.

Find below the key details on student fluency goals and the related instructional practices needed to meet these goals.

Fluency Skill Goal 1 Students master and apply reading fluency skills, allowing them to read and comprehend a wide variety of narrative and informational texts with increasing ease and accuracy.		
Grade Level	Related Academic Standard	Grade Level Expectations
Third – Twelfth Grade	RWC-GR.3-12-S.2-GLE.1-3	Apply foundational reading skills and grade-level language skills to fluently read and comprehend a wide range of texts, including narrative, informational, and technical texts, with attention to fluency skills for both silent and oral reading, including accuracy, phrasing, intonation, and appropriate reading rate based on text type.
Second Grade	RWC-GR.2-S.2-GLE.1-3	Read grade-level text accurately and fluently, attending to phrasing, intonation, and punctuation, while adjusting reading



		rate according to the type of text and purpose for reading.
First Grade	RWC-GR.1-S.2-GLE.1-3	Apply foundational reading skills to decode and read grade-level decodable texts with accuracy, self-monitoring for understanding, and correcting mistakes as needed, demonstrating appropriate fluency in both word recognition and comprehension.
Kindergarten	RWC-GR.K-S.2-GLE.1-3	Demonstrate fluency in sound-letter correspondences and read text consisting of short sentences that include learned high-frequency words and consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words with accuracy and expression.
Preschool	RWC-GR.PK-S.2-GLE.2-4	Demonstrate fluency in recognizing and naming letters, as well as identifying a minimum of 10 letter-sound correspondences.

Key Instructional Fluency Practices

Model fluent reading using different text types and genres.
Screen and continually assess fluency skills.
Incorporate interactive activities like flashcard drills or games to practice fluency in letter recognition, letter naming, and letter-sound correspondences.
Employ various assisted reading strategies such as echo, choral, reading-while-listening, and partner reading.
Teach prosody skills through activities for varied expression in reading, emphasizing appropriate pauses for punctuation marks (e.g., commas), and adjusting tone for different punctuation (e.g., raising tone for questions).
Independent practice with teacher feedback using decodable or skill-appropriate text.
Provide opportunities for students to read together in pairs or small groups, practicing fluent reading through repetition and peer feedback.
Use repeated oral reading practice.
Practice reading at varying speeds depending on the type of text (e.g., faster for familiar texts, slower for more complex or analytical reading).
Students analyze and read texts aloud, practicing appropriate expression based on the mood, theme, or character voice.
Encourage sustained independent reading outside of instructional time.
Use bilingual books or dual-language texts to support multilingual learners.
Use fluency assessments as a screener for older students to identify potential issues in phonemic awareness, phonics, and vocabulary by analyzing reading errors, as low fluency scores often signal underlying weaknesses in these foundational skills, prompting further diagnostic evaluation.
Provide targeted differentiation and specific interventions for students identified as needing support with fluency skills.



Use assistive technology tools in conjunction with traditional reading practices and instructional supports to meet diverse learning needs.

Collaborate with school professionals such as ELD teachers, special education teachers, and speech-language pathologists to support students' reading fluency development through targeted interventions and strategies.

Ensure that students have access to diverse, high-quality reading and library materials that reflect various cultures, experiences, and perspectives.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the foundation of effective communication, both oral and written. It begins early in life through spoken interactions and evolves across grade levels, growing in depth and breadth. Vocabulary development is not just about learning new words, but also understanding their meanings, uses, and connections to other words. A strong vocabulary is crucial for reading comprehension, clear expression of ideas, and the development of critical thinking skills. It supports the construction of background knowledge and aids in understanding complex texts, making it a key component of academic success.

While much vocabulary is learned through listening, speaking, and reading, direct and explicit instruction is essential for deeper word knowledge. The National Reading Panel (NICHHD, 2000) emphasized the importance of active engagement, repeated exposure, and both direct and indirect vocabulary instruction. Research shows that students retain vocabulary better when actively interacting with words through activities such as responding to questions during reading, using visual aids, acting out word meanings, and applying words in writing. This active involvement is crucial for academic success, as a rich vocabulary enables students to comprehend and analyze texts more effectively, supporting their mastery of content across subjects.

Find below the key details on student vocabulary goals and the related instructional practices needed to meet these goals.

Vocabulary Goal 1 Students demonstrate an understanding of how language functions in various contexts, apply diverse word-learning strategies, acquire and use grade-appropriate vocabulary to understand new content, and make intentional and effective word choices to convey meaning and style in writing and speaking.		
Grade Level	Related Academic Standard	Grade Level Expectations
Eleventh/Twelfth Grade	RWC-GR.11/12-S.2-GLE.3	Understand how language influences the comprehension of narrative, argumentative, and informational texts. Able to independently acquire and apply new vocabulary, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level.



Ninth/Tenth Grade	RWC-GR.9/10-S.2-GLE.3	Utilize context, parts of speech, grammar, and word choice to understand narrative, argumentative, and informational texts. Acquire and apply general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level.
Eighth Grade	RWC-GR.8-S.2-GLE.3	Apply knowledge of word structure, grammar, and context to determine the meaning of new words and phrases in increasingly complex texts. Understands and uses figurative language, word relationships, and precise language, while acquiring and applying grade-appropriate academic and domain-specific words.
Seventh Grade	RWC-GR.7-S.2-GLE.3	Apply knowledge of word relationships, word structures, and sentence structures to determine the meaning of new words in increasingly complex texts. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and precise language, while acquiring and applying grade-appropriate academic and domain-specific words.
Sixth Grade	RWC-GR.6-S.2-GLE.3	Apply knowledge of word relationships, word structures, and sentence structures to determine the meaning of new words in context. Demonstrates understanding of figures of speech, using word relationships to enhance meaning and distinguishing between the connotations of similar words.
Fifth Grade	RWC-GR.5-S.2-GLE.3	Apply morphological knowledge, structural analysis, context clues, and word relationships to determine the meaning of unknown words. Demonstrates understanding of figurative language, idioms, and word relationships, using academic and domain-specific vocabulary, including logical terms.
Fourth Grade	RWC-GR.4-S.2-GLE.3	Use various strategies to clarify the meaning of unknown words. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, idioms, and word relationships, including antonyms, synonyms, and nuances. Accurately use grade-appropriate academic and domain-specific vocabulary, including terms for actions, emotions, and specific topics.
Third Grade	RWC-GR.3-S.2-GLE.3	Clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words using context, Greek and Latin affixes, and word structure. Understand figurative language, idioms, and word relationships, including antonyms, synonyms, and nuances. Use grade-appropriate academic and domain-specific vocabulary accurately.

Second Grade	RWC-GR.2-S.2 GLE.3	Clarify the meaning of unknown words using context, prefixes, roots, and compound words. Understand figurative language, word relationships, and shades of meaning, and connect words to real life. Use acquired vocabulary to express ideas.
First Grade	RWC-GR.1-S.2-GLE.3	Apply vocabulary knowledge to clarify the meaning of unknown words using various strategies, and with guidance, demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and shades of meaning. Use acquired words and phrases, including conjunctions, to signal simple relationships.
Kindergarten	RWC-GR.K-S.2-GLE.3	Clarify the meaning of unknown words, identify new meanings for familiar words, use inflections and affixes as clues, and apply grade-level vocabulary.
Preschool	RWC-GR.PK-S.2-GLE.3 RWC-GR.PK-S.2-GLE.4	Comprehend and use increasingly complex vocabulary, follow multi-step directions, engage in extended conversations, express ideas and needs, differentiate between questions and statements, and speak in five- to six-word sentences.

Key Instructional Vocabulary Practices

Provide direct, explicit vocabulary instruction across all content areas.
Engage students in practicing new words through activities such as sentence creation, turn-and-talk opportunities, and using graphic organizers to visually map out word meanings and connections.
Select rich, high-utility words for instruction that will appear in conversation and literature, words essential for understanding concepts or texts, and words from content area instruction.
Explicitly model new words using student-friendly definitions, providing clear examples and non-examples.
Provide repetition of vocabulary words, appearing in a variety of contexts.
Provide immediate corrective feedback during instructional activities to ensure accurate understanding and usage.
Instruct and engage students in processing word meanings at deeper levels, making connections between new words with known words.
Provide cumulative review and practice of previously learn words.
Expose students to a wide range of words through reading aloud from a wide range of narrative and informational texts.
Teach morphemic analysis explicitly and systematically to support building word meaning through knowledge of root words, prefixes and suffixes and structural analysis.
Teach students to predict meaning of new vocabulary using knowledge of word relationships, word structures, and sentence structures.
Provide activities and materials are designed to elicit high levels of responding and engagement
Assess vocabulary skills through both formal methods, such as tests and quizzes, and informal methods, like observations and interactive activities, to gauge understanding and application.

Provide targeted differentiation and specific interventions for students identified as needing support with vocabulary skills and background knowledge.

Collaborate with school professionals such as ELD teachers, special education teachers, and speech-language pathologists to support students' reading vocabulary development through targeted interventions and strategies.

Ensure that students have access to diverse, high-quality reading and library materials that reflect various cultures, experiences, and perspectives.

Language Structure

Knowledge of the structure of language is essential for effective communication and comprehension. Language structure encompasses the rules and patterns governing word order, sentence formation, punctuation, and syntax. Understanding these structures allows students to express their ideas clearly, interpret complex texts accurately, and engage in meaningful conversations. A solid grasp of language structure is essential not only for speaking and writing effectively but also for understanding how language works in various contexts. As students advance in their education, the ability to analyze and manipulate language structures becomes increasingly important for academic success and the development of critical thinking skills. This section will focus on the key components of language structure and its role in supporting both language development and literacy achievement.

Find below the key details on student language structure goals and the related instructional practices needed to meet these goals.

Language Structure Goal 1

Students understand and apply knowledge of language structure, including word order, sentence structure, punctuation, and syntax, and conventions to communicate clearly in speaking and writing, and comprehend complex texts accurately.

Grade Level	Related Academic Standard	Grade Level Expectations
Eleventh/Twelfth Grade	RWC-GR.11/12-S.2-GLE.3 RWC-GR.11/12-S.3-GLE.4	Demonstrate mastery of Standard English grammar, usage, punctuation, and syntax in reading, speaking, and writing. Understand that language conventions change over time and can be contested to critically engage with different viewpoints, communicate effectively across diverse contexts, and adapt writing to contemporary standards while respecting language diversity.
Ninth/Tenth Grade	RWC-GR.9/10-S.2-GLE.3 RWC-GR.9/10-S.3-GLE.4	Demonstrate command of Standard English grammar, usage, punctuation, and capitalization in reading, writing, and speaking. Use and understand parallel structure, varied phrases and clauses, and correct punctuation.



Eighth Grade	RWC-GR.8-S.2-GLE.3 RWC-GR.8-S.3-GLE.4	Demonstrate command of Standard English grammar, usage, punctuation, and capitalization in reading, writing, and speaking for effective comprehension and communication. Understand active and passive voice, different verb moods to convey meaning, and correct punctuation.
Seventh Grade	RWC-GR.7-S.2-GLE.3 RWC-GR.7-S.3-GLE.4	Demonstrate command of Standard English grammar, usage, punctuation, and capitalization, using phrases, clauses, and sentence types for effective writing, speaking, reading, and listening.
Sixth Grade	RWC-GR.6-S.2-GLE.3 RWC-GR.6-S.3-GLE.4	Demonstrate command of Standard English grammar, usage, punctuation, and capitalization in reading, writing, and speaking, as well as recognize variations in language usage for comprehension and clear and coherent communication.
Fifth Grade	RWC-GR.5-S.2-GLE.3 RWC-GR.5-S.3-GLE.4	Apply understanding of the conventions of Standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics in reading, writing, and speaking to comprehend text, make meaning clear, and strengthen style.
Fourth Grade	RWC-GR.4-S.2-GLE.3 RWC-GR.4-S.3-GLE.4	Understand why and how writers use the conventions of Standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics to clarify their meaning and enhance reading comprehension.
Third Grade	RWC-GR.3-S.2-GLE.3 RWC-GR.3-S.3-GLE.4	Apply knowledge of grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling conventions in reading and writing. Use a recursive process to plan, draft, revise, and edit for clarity and effectiveness.
Second Grade	RWC-GR.2-S.2 GLE.3 RWC-GR.2-S.3-GLE.4	Demonstrate command of grammar and usage when reading, writing, or speaking, including subject-verb agreement, sentence structure, reflexive pronouns, and irregular verbs. Revise and edit writing to ensure clear communication with correct spelling, capitalization, grammar, and punctuation
First Grade	RWC-GR.1-S.2-GLE.3 RWC-GR.1-S.3-GLE.4	Understand and use grade-appropriate grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation, including printing upper- and lowercase letters, using various types of nouns and pronouns, and matching nouns with correct verbs. Construct and expand simple and compound sentences.
Kindergarten	RWC-GR.K-S.2-GLE.3 RWC-GR.K-S.3-GLE.4	Understand and apply appropriate mechanics and conventions when reading and creating simple texts, including uppercase and lowercase letters, common nouns and verbs, simple sentences, plurals, and frequently occurring prepositions.
Preschool	RWC_GR.PK-S.1-GLE.1-2 RWC-GR.PK-S.2-GLE.3 RWC-GR.PK-S.3-GLE.1	Demonstrate an understanding of spoken language, print concepts and conventions, and familiarity with writing tools, all as part of developing emerging skills using written representations, symbols, and letters.



Key Language Structure Practices
Provide direct, explicit instruction related to grammar and syntax.
Explicitly teach parts of speech emphasizing function with practice activities.
Provide passages with missing words or phrases that students fill in to build an understanding of sentence structure and grammar.
Identify different sentence types (e.g., simple, compound, complex) in texts to discuss their function and how they affect understanding.
Start with simple sentences and progressively move to compound and complex sentences to build students' confidence and skills step by step.
Use examples of incorrect sentences for students to identify and correct, focusing on common syntactic errors
Provide opportunities for students to expand sentences orally and in writing.
Teach students to identify and analyze challenging sentences in read-alouds or independent reading, encouraging them to consider what makes a sentence easy or difficult to understand.
Provide exposure to complex sentences by using them when speaking to students, then recasting them in simpler, shorter sentences.
Have students restate complex sentences in their own words to ensure comprehension.
Provide opportunities that build syntactic awareness, such as analyzing sentence structures, comparing simple and complex sentences, and practicing sentence elaboration or combining.
Use mentor sentences from well-written texts as models to help students understand effective sentence construction and apply it in their own writing.
Engage students in creating sentences with varied structures collaboratively to see how different constructions affect meaning.
Help students identify and compare syntactic structures in English and other languages or dialects to build understanding of differences and similarities.
Provide prompts that include specific sentence structures or grammar points students need to use, promoting practice and application.
Assess grammar and syntax skills through both formal methods, such as tests, quizzes and writing samples, and informal methods, like observations, conversations, and interactive activities, to gauge understanding and application.
Provide targeted differentiation and specific interventions for students identified as needing support with language structure skills.
Collaborate with school professionals such as ELD teachers, special education teachers, and speech-language pathologists to support students' language structure development through targeted interventions and strategies.

Comprehension

Language comprehension is the ability to understand spoken and written language, including its structure, vocabulary, and meaning. Reading comprehension is the ability to understand, interpret, and analyze written text. It involves not only decoding words but also making connections between the text and prior knowledge, identifying key ideas, and drawing conclusions. Developing strong comprehension skills is essential for understanding a wide range of materials and for effective communication in both academic and real-world contexts. As students progress, they learn to apply strategies that enhance their ability to engage with texts, ask critical questions, and build meaning from what they read.

Comprehension Goal 1 Students develop the skills to read a wide variety of literary texts and informational texts and apply these skills to build knowledge and deepen their understanding of the human experience.		
Grade Level	Related Academic Standard	Grade Level Expectations
Eleventh/Twelfth Grade	RWC-GR11-12-S.2-GLE.1-2	Interpret and evaluate complex literature and informational texts using various critical reading strategies.
Ninth/Tenth Grade	RWC-GR.9-10-S.2-GLE.1-2	Analyze traditional and contemporary literary texts by examining literary elements and comparing them, while also understanding the logical progression of ideas in increasingly complex informational texts.
Eighth Grade	RWC-GR.8-S.2-GLE.1-2	Analyze and evaluate literary elements and an author's choices to understand literary and informational text.
Seventh Grade	RWC-GR.7-S.2-GLE.1-2	Analyze the connections between literary elements to deepen understanding of literary texts, and summarize and evaluate informational texts to demonstrate comprehension.
Sixth Grade	RWC-GR.6-S.2-GLE.1-2	Analyze literary elements across different types of literature and examine the organization and structure of informational texts to develop meaning.
Fifth Grade	RWC-GR.5-S.2-GLE.1-2	Apply strategies to interpret and analyze various types of literary and informational texts.
Fourth Grade	RWC-GR.4-S.2-GLE.1-2	Apply strategies to comprehend and interpret literary and informational texts.
Third Grade	RWC-GR.3-S.2-GLE.1-2	Apply strategies to fluently read and comprehend various literary and informational texts.
Second Grade	RWC-GR.2-S.2-GLE.1-2	Apply specific skills to comprehend and fluently read literary and informational texts.
First Grade	RWC-GR.1-S.2-GLE.1-2	Apply foundational reading strategies to fluently read and comprehend literary and informational texts.
Kindergarten	RWC-GR.K-S.2-GLE.1-2	Develop and apply the concepts of print and comprehension of literary and informational texts.
Preschool	RWC-GR.PK-S.2-GLE.1	Children understand and obtain meaning from stories and information from books and other texts.



Comprehension Goal 2 Students utilize comprehension skills to research using multiple sources, assess the quality and relevance of information, and ethically apply it to answer complex questions.		
Grade Level	Related Academic Standard	Grade Level Expectations
Eleventh/Twelfth Grade	RWC-GR.11-12-S.4-GLE.1	Gather and integrate information from multiple authoritative literary and informational sources to answer questions or solve problems. Create well-organized research projects that clearly present and defend conclusions and solutions.
Ninth/Tenth Grade	RWC-GR.9-10-S.4-GLE.1	Gather and integrate information from multiple authoritative literary and informational sources to create cohesive research projects that demonstrate a clear understanding of the subject.
Eighth Grade	RWC-GR.8-S.4-GLE.1	Ask key questions, find and assess relevant sources, gather and combine important information, and present findings in a clear and appropriate way.
Seventh Grade	RWC-GR.7-S.4-GLE.1	Ask research questions, combine answers from multiple credible sources, and present conclusions in a clear and suitable format.
Sixth Grade	RWC-GR.6-S.4-GLE.1	Ask research question(s), gather and combine relevant, credible resources, give proper credit, and present findings.
Fifth Grade	RWC-GR.5-S.4-GLE.1	Conduct research to find, summarize, combine, and document information from both print and digital sources, then present the findings clearly and appropriately.
Fourth Grade	RWC-GR.4-S.4-GLE.1	Use a variety of resources to gather and share knowledge related to open-ended research questions.
Third Grade	RWC-GR.3-S.4-GLE.1	Gather, interpret, and share information learned during short research projects.
Second Grade	RWC-GR.2-S.4-GLE.1	Participate in shared research and inquiry, collecting information from various resources to answer questions.
First Grade	RWC-GR.1-S.4-GLE.1	Participate in shared research and inquiry, writing, recalling, or gathering information to answer questions.
Kindergarten	RWC-GR.K-S.4-GLE.1	Explore the goals of research and inquiry by using resources in collaborative settings.
Preschool	RWC-GR.PK-S.4-GLE.1	Begin research by asking a question to identify and define a problem and its potential solutions.

Key Comprehension Instructional Practices
Build content area and background knowledge by incorporating real-world topics, current events, and cultural perspectives to expand students' understanding of the world.
Expose students to diverse texts across various difficulties, disciplines, and genres.
Plan purposeful read-alouds, asking questions, engaging in discussions, and modeling comprehension monitoring throughout the reading.



Practice essential comprehension skills by teaching strategies such as summarizing, visualizing, and questioning.
Foster metacognitive skills by teaching students to self-monitor their understanding, identify breakdowns in comprehension, and apply strategies to clarify meaning.
Model how to make inferences and predictions using text evidence.
Use peer discussions and group activities to allow students to share ideas, challenge one another's thinking, and co-construct understanding.
Encourage students to deeply explore a topic through connected topics, research, and discussion, fostering sustained engagement and deeper understanding.
Plan for active engagement with texts by incorporating discussions and reflective writing.
Help students visualize key ideas, relationships, and the structure of texts through tools like concept maps, Venn diagrams, or story maps to support comprehension
Use multimedia, interactive digital texts, or apps to support comprehension and provide a more engaging learning experience.

Writing and Composition

Writing is a fundamental component of literacy. Writing is a means of critical inquiry; it promotes problem solving and mastering new concepts. Adept writers can work through various ideas while producing informational, persuasive, and narrative or literary texts. In other words, writing can be used as a medium for reasoning and making intellectual connections. As students arrange ideas to persuade, describe, and inform, they engage in logical critique, and they are likely to gain new insights and a deeper understanding of concepts and content.

Writing and Composition Goal 1 Students develop the skills to write narratives, arguments, and informational or explanatory texts using techniques specific to each genre and purpose.		
Grade Level	Related Academic Standard	Grade Level Expectations
Eleventh/Twelfth Grade	RWC-GR.11-12-S.3-GLE.1-3	Write strong arguments that address audience values, informative texts that convey complex ideas clearly, and narratives that build toward a purposeful tone or outcome.
Ninth/Tenth Grade	RWC-GR.9-10-S.3-GLE.1-3	Write well-supported, unbiased arguments with valid reasoning. Create clear, structured informative texts, engaging narratives with multiple plot lines, and refine writing through a recursive process.
Eighth Grade	RWC-GR.8-S.3-GLE.1-3	Write cohesive arguments that distinguish claims from opposing views, clarifying connections. Create clear, organized informative texts with precise language, and craft engaging narratives with descriptive details and logical pacing.



Seventh Grade	RWC-GR.7-S.3-GLE.1-3	Write organized arguments with reasoning, evidence, opposing claims, and formal language. Create structured informative texts with relevant support and style, and craft engaging narratives with description, sensory language, dialogue, and pacing.
Sixth Grade	RWC-GR.6-S.3-GLE.1-3	Write clear arguments with reasons, evidence, credible sources, and formal style. Create organized, precise informative texts and engaging narratives with sensory language, dialogue, description, and sequencing.
Fifth Grade	RWC-GR.5-S.3-GLE.1-3	Write opinion pieces with support for various purposes, informative texts with clear focus and precise language, and engaging narratives using literary techniques, character development, and transitions.
Fourth Grade	RWC-GR.4-S.3-GLE.1-3	Write opinion pieces with reasons and information. Create informative texts with facts, definitions, and precise language. Craft engaging narratives with descriptive details and dialogue.
Third Grade	RWC-GR.3-S.3-GLE.1-3	Write opinion pieces supporting a point of view with reasons. Create informative texts with facts, definitions, and details, ending with a conclusion. Write narratives with descriptive details, a clear sequence of events, and closure.
Second Grade	RWC-GR.2-S.3-GLE.1-3	Write opinion pieces with supporting reasons. Create informative texts organized around main ideas with relevant details, facts, and definitions. Write narratives that describe events in sequence and provide closure.
First Grade	RWC-GR.1-S.3-GLE.1-3	Write an opinion with supporting reasons. Create informative texts with a clear topic, related details, and closure. Recount sequenced events with details and closure.
Kindergarten	RWC-GR.K-S.3-GLE.1-3	Write opinions, informative texts, and narratives using labels, dictation, and drawing.
Preschool	RWC-GR.PK-S.3-GLE.1	Become familiar with writing tools, conventions, and developing skills to communicate using written representations, symbols, and letters.

Writing and Composition Goal 2		
Students refine their writing process to produce clear, coherent, and polished work free of errors.		
Grade Level	Related Academic Standard	Grade Level Expectations
Eleventh/Twelfth Grade	RWC-GR.11-12-S.3-GLE.4	Use a recursive process to produce, publish, and update individual and shared writing projects in response to feedback.
Ninth/Tenth Grade	RWC-GR.9-10-S.3-GLE.4	Use a recursive process to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing projects.
Eighth Grade	RWC-GR.8-S.3-GLE.4	Produce polished drafts with strong grammar, mechanics, and appropriate style.



Seventh Grade	RWC-GR.7-S.3-GLE.4	Plan, draft, revise, and edit to ensure clarity, coherence, and proper conventions.
Sixth Grade	RWC-GR.6-S.3-GLE.4	Plan, draft, revise, and edit to ensure clarity, coherence, and proper conventions.
Fifth Grade	RWC-GR.5-S.3-GLE.4	Apply standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics to enhance clarity and style.
Fourth Grade	RWC-GR.4-S.3-GLE.4	Understand how writers use standard English conventions to clarify meaning.
Third Grade	RWC-GR.3-S.3-GLE.4	Use a recursive process to plan, draft, revise, and edit writing with proper grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
Second Grade	RWC-GR.2-S.3-GLE.4	Use a process to revise and edit to communicate clearly with appropriate spelling, capitalization, grammar, and punctuation.
First Grade	RWC-GR.1-S.3-GLE.4	Use appropriate spelling, capitalization, grammar, and punctuation.
Kindergarten	RWC-GR.K-S.3-GLE.4	Use appropriate mechanics and conventions when creating simple texts.

Key Writing and Composition Practices

Provide direct, explicit writing instruction using structured and sequenced steps to teach specific skills.
Break writing tasks into smaller, more manageable parts or steps.
Provide sentence starters, writing templates, graphics organizers, and checklists to aid students in the writing process.
Provide opportunities for students to work collaboratively.
Use mentor texts as a model for writing.
Increase the amount students write in all subject areas as they develop writing skills.
Teach sentence writing first, then build to paragraphs, and finally multi-paragraph compositions.
Teach and reinforce grammar instruction in the context of student writing.
Emphasize planning and revising as part of the writing process.
Refine student writing with summarization, expansion, and sentence combining exercises.
Integrate writing instruction into English, history, science, and other subjects.
Explicitly teach handwriting skills, including cursive writing.
Create opportunities for various writing tasks such as narrative, expository, persuasive, and descriptive.



Literacy Leadership

Strong literacy leadership is essential for ensuring high-quality instruction and improving student outcomes. Effective leaders set the vision for literacy, support evidence-based practices, and create the conditions for best first instruction in schools and districts. By prioritizing professional learning, coaching, and data-driven decision-making, literacy leaders empower educators to implement effective strategies that meet diverse student needs. A strong foundation in literacy leadership fosters a culture of continuous improvement, ensuring all students receive the instruction they need to develop essential reading and writing skills.

Starting in the 2024-25 school year, all K-3 principals and administrators must complete evidence-based training in the science of reading, as required by the Colorado READ Act. This training, aligned with the [Colorado Principal Literacy Standards](#), ensures school leaders have the knowledge to oversee effective literacy instruction. It covers key aspects of reading acquisition, including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Principals will learn to identify high-quality literacy instruction, support teachers in implementing evidence-based strategies, assess student progress, and address reading difficulties. Districts must submit proof of compliance, reinforcing the state's commitment to literacy leadership and strong instructional practices.

Job Embedded Professional Learning

Sustained, job-embedded professional learning is critical for improving literacy instruction and ensuring that evidence-based practices are effectively implemented in classrooms. Unlike one-time professional development sessions, job-embedded learning is ongoing, collaborative, and directly connected to educators' daily work. When teachers receive consistent coaching, feedback, and opportunities to apply new strategies in real time, they are better equipped to meet the diverse literacy needs of their students.

Effective job-embedded professional learning includes instructional coaching, peer collaboration, and data-driven decision-making. Literacy coaches and school leaders play a vital role in guiding teachers through the implementation of best practices, modeling effective instruction, and analyzing student data to inform instruction. Additionally, professional learning communities (PLCs) provide educators with structured opportunities to reflect, share insights, and refine their practice.

By investing in job-embedded professional learning, schools and districts create a culture of continuous improvement, where educators feel supported and empowered to enhance literacy instruction. This sustained professional growth ultimately leads to stronger student outcomes and ensures that all learners receive high-quality reading instruction.

Culturally Responsive Education

Teaching is complex, but its most fundamental elements are content, instruction, and students. Students need a welcoming, stimulating, and relatable learning environment to maximize their chances for success. For this reason, BFI requires culturally responsive education as a necessary starting point.



Culturally responsive education has grown in breadth and depth in the several decades since it was first formulated. Over two decades ago, Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) described it as a form of teaching that calls for engaging learners whose experiences and cultures are traditionally excluded from mainstream settings. Geneva Gay has since refined culturally responsive education to be "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (2018, p. 36) This includes instructional techniques, instructional materials, student-teacher relationships, classroom climate, and self-awareness to improve learning for students. Other scholars have helped connect culturally responsive education with other ideas, such as Hammond's (2014) work to connect culturally responsive education to neuroscience and Paris's (2012) arguments that the work of teaching should not just be culturally responsive, but to sustain cultural pluralism and cultural equality.

These scholars promote asset-based approaches as alternatives to popular deficit-oriented teaching methods which position the languages, cultures, and identities of students as barriers to learning. While these pedagogies are not identical, they share a common goal: defy the deficit model and ensure students see themselves and their communities reflected and valued in the content taught in school.

Strong Disciplinary Literacy

The final piece of BFI involves the knowledge and skills we want students to learn. For most content areas, these goals are described by the Colorado Academic Standards. Putting the goals into action involves the creation, selection, and use of curriculum, the organized plan of instruction, and the associated materials such as textbooks, software, and other curriculum materials. "Learning the standards" is a misguided phrase that falsely implies that the outcome we want for students is that they know lists of facts or merely to accumulate skills. What is more accurate is that standards and curriculum should serve to guide students' development of disciplinary literacy.

Disciplinary literacy is the intersection of content knowledge, experiences, and skills necessary to demonstrate understanding through the ability to read, write, communicate, and think critically using approaches unique to a specific discipline. Shanahan and Shanahan (2012) contend that disciplinary literacy emphasizes the knowledge and abilities possessed by those who create, communicate, and use knowledge within the disciplines. It honors the thinking within disciplines of study and invites students to engage in the academic discipline while developing a voice as a member of that community.

What does it mean to read, write, think, and communicate like a scientist? What about as a historian, writer, musician, artist, engineer, or mathematician? In today's diverse and global world, these are questions teachers and their students should be considering. Doing so supports students' literacy, learning, and ability to more readily engage in the disciplines they study (Moje, 2008). These considerations also serve to develop teachers' instruction so they can apprentice students to negotiate and create texts in discipline-specific ways (Brozo et al., 2013). For example, students will read and write narratives, poetry, and speeches within an English classroom, be expected to read and perform musical scores in their orchestra classroom, read and write about scientifically based phenomena in their science classroom, and understand and generate art in their art class.



Disciplinary literacy requires students to read and write in specialized ways for specific purposes determined by the discipline (Moie, 2008; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Each discipline requires students to employ particular knowledge, tools, and abilities to communicate, create, and use information within that discipline (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012). Teachers must apprentice students through scaffolded instruction and guided practice, helping students "develop the capacity to read disciplinary-specific texts through an insider perspective" (Buehl, 2017).

Supporting Struggling Readers

Students may struggle learning to read for a number of reasons including neurological and biological disabilities, dyslexia, and/or low language proficiency (EL, disability, environmental). Students who are struggling to learn to read may benefit from targeted (Tier 2) and intensive (Tier 3) instruction. These additional layers of instruction are more explicit and systematic in nature than Universal Tier 1 and are adjusted and flexed based upon individual student data. However, students requiring additional targeted and scaffolded instruction still benefit from and need access to grade level content through Tier 1 instruction.

Research conducted from preschool into high school demonstrates that targeted, specific, explicit, systematic skill instruction provided in small groups during Tiers 2 and 3 is effective in supporting students in becoming readers (Baker et al., 2015; Daffern et al., 2020; Dube et al., 2013). During intervention instruction, formative data is collected daily and utilized to adjust instruction to maximize student growth. Instruction during Targeted (Tier 2) is more explicit and provides scaffolding necessary to support learning. Mastery of skills is required before moving to the next skill in the continuum. Instruction includes connecting skills and strategies to text. Students may require 30 minutes of intensive instruction daily.

If students are not making enough progress, intensive (Tier 3) instruction will be required. Intensive (Tier 3) intervention is an additional 30 minutes beyond Tier 1 and Tier 2. The same targeted skills are taught during Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction. The lowering of group size increases the intensity of instruction and allows for more repetitions, feedback, and positive reinforcement during instruction. This instruction is even more explicit and systematic than Tier 2.

READ Plans serve as a means to document the intervention and instructional plan for students in becoming readers for K-3 students. READ Plans must leverage data, be based in science, and employ structured literacy if they are going to be effective. In the fall, administer skill inventories/diagnostics in order to plan to meet the needs of students: scheduling, resource allocation, and grouping. Teachers meet weekly to review formative data and adjust instruction and flex groups. The more frequently data is leveraged to adjust instruction, the more progress students will make. Through the comprehensive statewide literacy needs assessment process, CDE identified a need for more systematic and explicit support for students who remain on READ Plans beyond 3rd grade. It is imperative that older students who struggle with reading are identified and served in the same manner that k-3 students are. Students need to be identified as early as possible and data must be used to drive instruction focusing on the strengths and deficits in each component skill.

A few common reasons why students might struggle with reading are as follows:

- **Dyslexia:** The International Dyslexia Association (IDA) along with the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) adopted the following definition of dyslexia:

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge. (International Dyslexia Association, 2002)

Every teacher in Colorado is likely to be a teacher of students with dyslexia. Research indicates that 12% to 20% of students fall on the continuum of reading difficulties, beginning with those who exhibit mild characteristics of dyslexia and spanning to those with significant impairments in learning to read, spell, and write. Chances are high, if not absolute, that a teacher at any grade level and in any subject area will encounter a student or students with dyslexia over the course of their career. All teachers need to know that dyslexia exists, that it is real; they must know how to recognize the sometimes obvious — and, at other times, subtle — characteristics and symptoms of dyslexia. Teachers without expertise in learning differences need to know which colleagues will help them in making essential adjustments and accommodations and in choosing and utilizing teaching strategies that will allow all students to learn and be successful.

For additional guidance on dyslexia and support for struggling readers see [CDE's Dyslexia Handbook](#).

- **Insufficient Reading Instruction:** Ineffective or insufficient reading instruction can leave students without the necessary skills to decode words, comprehend text, or engage in higher-level thinking about what they read. There are many reasons for ineffective or insufficient reading instruction. One common cause is frequent absences and interruptions to instruction. When students are absent from school or when there are interruptions to instruction due to factors like school closures, teacher absences, or schedule changes, they may miss important reading lessons and activities. This can result in gaps in their understanding of fundamental reading skills and concepts.

Consistency and continuity are crucial for effective learning, especially in developing complex skills like reading. Reading skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension develop over time with consistent instruction and practice. When students move from one grade level to the next, they may encounter new instructional approaches, expectations, and curriculum standards. Interruptions in instructional continuity can exacerbate the challenges of transitioning between grades, particularly if students have not had the opportunity to master the skills and concepts taught in previous grades. To ensure instructional continuity between grades, schools and districts can implement strategies such as vertical alignment of curriculum standards and instructional practices, collaboration between teachers across grade levels, consistent curricular use, and ongoing assessment and monitoring of students' progress.

- **Linguistic Diversity:** Students who are learning to read in a language different from the language used at home may face additional challenges learning to read due to differences in language structure and vocabulary. This includes multilingual students and students who speak a dialect or variation of a language that differs significantly from the standard form of the language used in instructional materials.

Multilingual learners, also known as English language learners (ELs), may be impacted when learning to read in a language that is not their home or preferred language. They may encounter challenges with phonology, vocabulary, grammar, and language structures that differ from their native language. Similarly, differences in vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar between a student's home dialect and the academic language of school can impact reading comprehension and fluency.

Multilingual learners and students with dialectal differences may also be impacted by instruction that does not include scaffolds relevant to cultural differences in language use, idiomatic expressions, and storytelling conventions. Students may struggle to understand texts that are culturally unfamiliar to them or that do not reflect their own linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Differences in language proficiency levels among multilingual learners and students with dialectal differences can further exacerbate literacy gaps. Students who are still developing proficiency in the language of instruction will require additional support to access grade-level reading materials and participate fully in reading instruction.

Differentiated instruction is required to give multilingual learners and students with dialectal differences access to both language and content. Addressing instructional necessities for multilingual learners and students with dialectal differences requires teacher knowledge about language structures, culturally responsive teaching practices, differentiated instruction, integration of literacy content throughout the day, and support services. Examples of support services based on student need could be English language development programs and dialect-inclusive instructional practice. Providing opportunities for students to use and celebrate their linguistic and cultural backgrounds can also help create an inclusive learning environment where all students can thrive.





Strong Systems and Infrastructure

A strong educational infrastructure is essential for effective literacy instruction and sustained improvement in student outcomes. Infrastructure refers to the internal systems within schools and districts that support educators in implementing instruction, ensuring alignment between curriculum, professional development, and leadership. Without these systems in place, even the most rigorous standards and evidence-based practices cannot be effectively enacted or sustained.

In a well-structured system, teachers should not have to develop their own curricular materials, create assessments, or build data analysis frameworks. Instead, schools and districts must provide high-quality instructional resources, standardized assessments, and clear processes for using data to inform instruction. This allows teachers to focus their time and expertise on delivering effective literacy instruction rather than spending valuable time designing materials or figuring out how to measure student progress.

A district with strong infrastructure will have:

- **A fully integrated PK-12 literacy plan** that reflects the local learning community's context and culture, includes advanced teacher training, promotes high student engagement, utilizes comprehensive assessments, and emphasizes strong community involvement.
- **A well-established literacy leadership team** with knowledgeable and experienced members who meet regularly to develop and implement comprehensive literacy strategies, monitor progress, and adjust initiatives as needed.
- **Informed and unified leadership** at all grade levels, ensuring that school and district leaders have a deep understanding of reading acquisition and evidence-based instructional practices, provide clarity when needed, and maintain a consistent approach to literacy.
- **A strong culture of learning for staff**, supported by comprehensive and targeted professional development, opportunities for continuous improvement, and a collaborative environment where staff feel included in decision-making and confident in new learning.
- **A robust data-based decision-making system**, including scheduled data team meetings where student progress is consistently analyzed to drive instruction and improve outcomes.
- SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) to set clear expectations and measure progress effectively.

When schools and districts establish strong infrastructure, they remove unnecessary burdens from teachers and create a coherent, supportive environment where educators can concentrate on their primary role—helping students build critical literacy skills. A well-aligned system ensures consistency, reduces variability in instruction, and ultimately leads to better student outcomes.

Accelerated Learning

In any school year, there are students who miss learning opportunities or struggle to master the content, concepts, and skills within a specific subject area. To combat this, educators in Colorado and across our nation are strategizing ways to provide students opportunities to "catch up" or recover the content, concepts, and skills



unlearned during the previous school year. It is broadly understood that the disruption of instruction, reduction of content, lack of access, virtual learning, and lack of social interactions due to changes in educational environment as a result COVID further exacerbated academic challenges experienced by our youngest learners, students of color, ELs, and students with learning disabilities across the birth to grade 12 continua. One way to support these students is through accelerated learning.

Accelerated learning is an intervention strategy that provides students with extra time and support to address unfinished learning. The information included below provides flexible, evidence-based guidance for schools and districts to consider as they develop and implement strategies to address unfinished learning in reading, writing, and communicating or English language arts.

Accelerated learning doesn't mean speeding up or compressing content. Instead, the focus is on embedding instruction and support for concepts and skills that have not yet been mastered during grade-level learning. Through accelerated learning, teachers integrate new concepts and skills and weave in the prior knowledge needed to master them. Detailed information can be found on the CDE website:

<https://www.cde.state.co.us/coreadingwriting/accelerated-learning-in-english-language-arts>

Parent and Family Engagement

Engaging parents and families is a critical component of effective literacy work and planning. Families play a vital role in supporting their children's literacy development, and districts must prioritize equipping them with the resources, guidance, and support needed to create strong learning environments at home. Providing families with accessible materials, strategies for reinforcing literacy skills, and opportunities to engage with educators can strengthen the connection between school and home.

A comprehensive literacy plan should include initiatives such as parent workshops, home literacy toolkits, and clear communication about literacy goals and expectations. Engaging families in decision-making through advisory groups or literacy committees can further enhance collaboration. Schools and districts can also foster meaningful partnerships by offering bilingual resources, hosting family literacy nights, and ensuring parents have access to progress monitoring tools. By empowering families with the knowledge and confidence to support their children's literacy development from preschool through high school, districts can help drive lasting, positive outcomes for students.

Internal and External Partnerships

Strong partnerships within schools and across communities are essential for building and sustaining effective literacy initiatives. Schools and districts should collaborate with both internal and external partners to expand literacy support beyond the classroom, creating a network of resources that reinforce student learning. Internally, cross-departmental collaboration among educators, administrators, and support staff ensures a cohesive approach to literacy instruction. Externally, partnerships with public libraries, after-school programs, and community organizations provide students with additional opportunities to develop literacy skills in engaging and meaningful ways.

School and public libraries offer access to diverse reading materials, literacy programs, and family engagement opportunities that complement classroom instruction. After-school programs and community organizations can provide tutoring, enrichment activities, and mentorship to reinforce literacy development. Additionally, partnerships with local businesses, universities, and nonprofit organizations can help districts secure funding, professional development, and resources to support literacy goals. By fostering strong internal and external partnerships, districts can create a well-rounded literacy ecosystem that supports students, families, and educators in achieving long-term success.



Implementation and Continuous Improvement

Successful implementation and continuous improvement are key to sustaining effective programs and practices. Sustainability requires not only maintaining key components after initial support ends but also ensuring the capacity to uphold and refine them over time.

Effective Implementation

The Statewide Literacy Plan prioritizes both the science of reading and implementation science. Implementation science includes research on capacity building, decision making, and policy creation necessary for effective program implementation. Implementation support helps ensure sustainability by guiding communities in building a shared vision, fostering accountability, and strengthening collaboration. Implementation research indicates that school- and district-level programs are more successfully sustained when certain factors are in place.

These factors include:

- Staff understanding why the change is needed and the current situation.
- Staff acceptance of and commitment to the program or changes.
- Staff determination to implement the changes.
- Belief that the program is practical, useful, and benefits students.
- Support and leadership from school and district administrators.

Leadership and implementation teams navigate many decisions in second-order change, involving learning and unlearning. Achieving lasting improvements in literacy outcomes demands continuous improvement over time, following defined implementation stages. This entails collective effort, context-specific adaptation, and ongoing learning. Stakeholders will need to engage in iterative cycles to identify and test change practices, predict outcomes, collect data, and study impacts. The school/district engaging in this work must create a process that allows for continuous improvement, recognizing that implementation stages require time and effort, and sustainability hinges on following defined activities across four overlapping stages.



The Four Stages of Implementation			
Exploration	Installation	Initial Implementation	Full Implementation
Identify the need for change Learn about possible practices that may provide solutions Learn what it will take to implement practices effectively Develop stakeholders and champions Assess and create readiness for change Decide whether to proceed	Establish the resources needed to use and implement as intended Identify the first implementers Develop an implementation action plan	Begin use of the new resource/practice for the first time Teachers: Learn how to use the resource School & District Leaders: Learn how to support teachers and community in new ways Adjust the Implementation Action Plan as needed	Teachers: Skillfully use resource/practice and is well integrated into instruction School & District Leaders: Routinely and effectively support teachers High levels of fidelity are reached and maintained

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

Colorado is committed to continuous improvement to improve literacy outcomes at all levels of the educational system: classroom, school, district, and state department of education. The continuous improvement process integrates existing structures such as Colorado’s Four Domains of Rapid School Improvement and the Unified Improvement Planning Process. It also involves the creation of local literacy plans to align with the state literacy plan, alongside evaluation and monitoring the success of Colorado’s Comprehensive Statewide Literacy Plan.

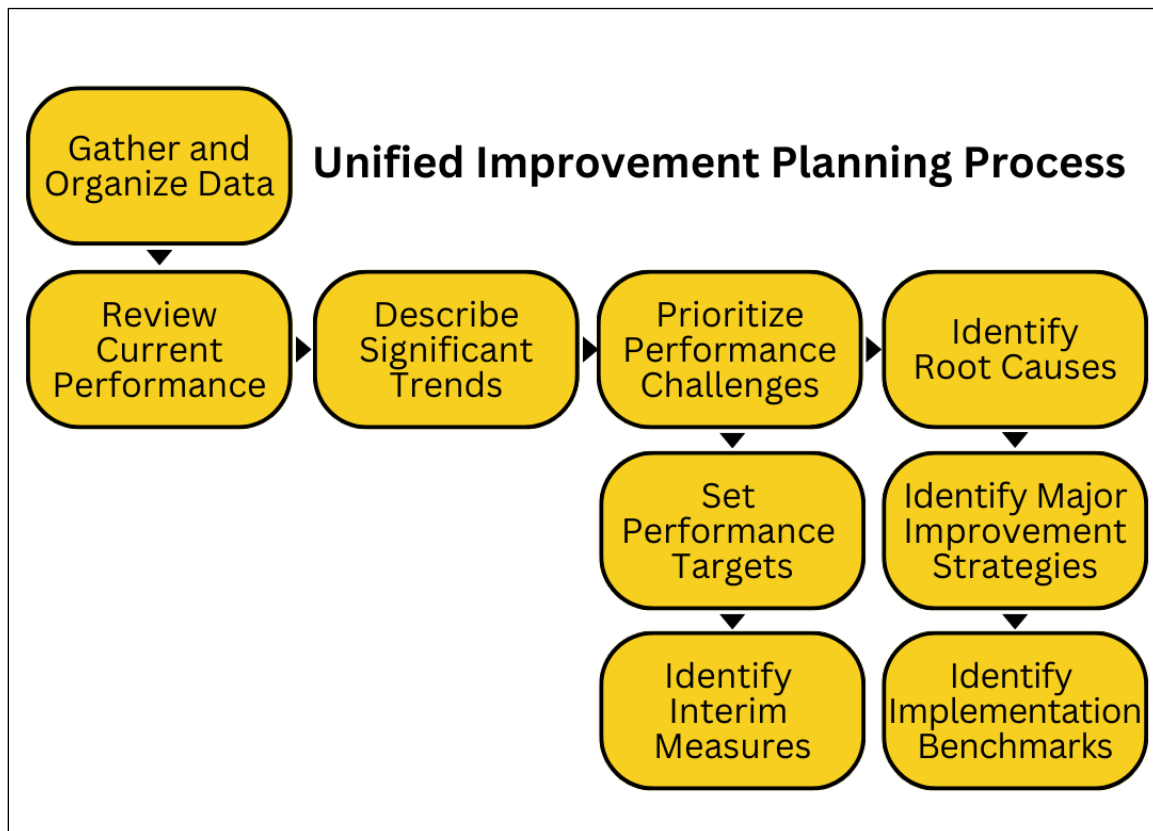
- [Four Domains of Rapid School Improvement Framework](#)

The Colorado Four Domains of Rapid School Improvement is a research proven framework to facilitate rapid improvement in schools by creating domains and practices that apply across the system of a state education agency, district, and school. Within the framework, four domains are outlined: Leadership for Rapid Improvement, Talent Management, Instructional Transformation, and Culture and Climate Shift. For each domain, practices are defined that describe the role of the state, district, and school, providing examples of their roles in successful school improvement efforts.

- **Unified Improvement Planning (UIP) Process**

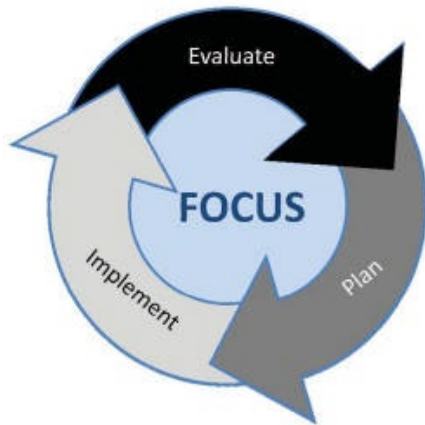
Unified Improvement Planning was introduced in 2009 to streamline improvement planning components of state and federal accountability requirements. Based on the Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (SB212-08), the primary purpose of improvement planning is to align efforts to: Ensure all students exit the K-12 education system ready for post-secondary education, and/or to be successful in the workforce, earning a living wage immediately upon graduation.

Colorado schools and districts can improve student learning and system effectiveness by engaging in a cycle of continuous improvement to manage their performance. To support this purpose, the Education Accountability Act of 2009 requires each Colorado district and school to create an annual improvement plan.



Development of Local Literacy Plans

Districts should develop local literacy plans that align with the state literacy plan to establish strong systems, structures, and goals for literacy instruction. These plans should provide a clear framework for implementing evidence-based literacy practices, supporting educators with professional development, and ensuring instructional consistency across schools. By aligning with the state plan, districts can create a cohesive approach that integrates data-driven decision-making, targeted interventions, and continuous monitoring of student progress. A well-structured local literacy plan also fosters collaboration among educators, administrators, and families, ensuring that literacy initiatives are sustainable and responsive to the needs of all students.



Measuring Success of the Statewide Literacy Plan

Colorado remains committed to strengthening comprehensive literacy instruction and improving student achievement by promoting alignment, collaboration, and capacity building within the state's literacy infrastructure. This effort includes fostering partnerships, emphasizing reading research, and advancing evidence-based literacy practices through professional development and programming.

The revised State Literacy Plan will provide statewide guidance for strengthening local literacy infrastructure. Using insights from the State Literacy Needs Assessment, local audits, and CDE data, schools and districts will develop aligned local literacy plans with a strong focus on equity. Collaboration among stakeholders will drive the advancement of scientific and evidence-based reading instruction.

To ensure consistency across the state, CDE will establish literacy leadership teams and model sites. Colorado will continue to use multiple data sources to monitor literacy outcomes, with data-driven decision-making guiding implementation and assessing the impact of the statewide literacy plan.



Measures of Effectiveness beyond student outcome data:

- **Improved literacy leadership:** Increased number of school and district leaders demonstrating proficiency in evidence-based literacy practices, as measured by leadership surveys or assessments.
- **Strengthened literacy infrastructure:** More districts and schools with literacy leadership teams, resulting in clearer roles, responsibilities, and improved communication around literacy initiatives.
- **Alignment of policies and practices:** A measurable increase in the alignment of district and school literacy plans with state-level literacy goals and evidence-based standards.
- **Enhanced literacy culture:** Evidence of a more robust literacy culture at the state, district, and school levels, demonstrated through teacher surveys and feedback on school-wide literacy initiatives.
- **Increased access to professional development:** More educators and community partners receiving high-quality, evidence-based professional development, tracked through attendance records, course completions, and satisfaction surveys.
- **Expansion of literacy coaching programs:** Increased number of literacy coaches deployed in districts and schools, with measurable improvements in teacher implementation of evidence-based literacy practices.
- **Diverse learning opportunities:** Expanded range of literacy learning opportunities offered to birth-12 educators, families, and community partners, including workshops, online modules, and community literacy events.
- **Targeted PD for diverse needs:** Evidence of targeted professional development addressing the specific literacy needs of multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and at-risk populations.
- **Improved teacher practice:** Evidence of improved instructional practices related to literacy, as measured by classroom observations, teacher self-reflections, and student literacy assessments.
- **Sustained educator engagement:** High retention rate in ongoing professional development programs, demonstrating sustained interest and commitment to improving literacy instruction over time.
- **Community partnerships:** Increased number of formal partnerships with local libraries, nonprofits, businesses, and cultural institutions, as tracked by partnership agreements and collaborative projects.
- **Community engagement:** Evidence of enhanced community involvement in school-based literacy efforts, measured by participation rates in community events, volunteer engagement, and feedback from community partners.
- **Improved family engagement:** Increased parent and family participation in literacy-related activities, such as workshops, school events, and home literacy practices, tracked by attendance and participation records.
- **Parent knowledge of literacy practices:** Increased parent understanding of evidence-based literacy practices, measured through pre- and post-surveys, as well as feedback from parent-teacher conferences.
- **Sustained family involvement:** Evidence of sustained family involvement in supporting literacy development at home, including parent surveys, feedback from school literacy nights, and follow-up with families engaged in literacy programs.



To measure success beyond student outcome data, we will collect data on measures of effectiveness through the following methods:

1. Surveys and Questionnaires

- Pre- and post-surveys for educators and school leaders to assess changes in knowledge and skills.
- Annual or semi-annual surveys on literacy leadership and coaching effectiveness.
- Parent surveys to assess engagement and understanding of literacy practices.

2. Attendance and Participation Records

- Track participation in professional development, coaching sessions, and community literacy events.
- Record family attendance at school-based literacy activities.

3. Classroom Observations

- Regular observations to assess the implementation of evidence-based literacy practices in classrooms.
- Use of rubrics to evaluate literacy instruction quality.

4. Student Literacy Assessments

- Measure student progress using standardized or district-specific literacy assessments, comparing baseline and post-assessment results.

5. Focus Groups and Interviews

- Conduct focus groups with educators, school leaders, parents, and community partners for qualitative feedback.
- Use interviews to explore the impact of partnerships and engagement strategies.

6. Partnership and Collaboration Logs

- Maintain records of formal agreements and collaborative projects with community organizations.
- Track the number and type of literacy initiatives with partners like libraries and local businesses.

7. Program Reports and Evaluations

- Collect regular reports from PD providers, coaches, and community literacy programs.
- Use participant evaluations to assess the quality and impact of sessions and events.

8. Feedback Forms

- Collect brief feedback from participants after literacy workshops or coaching sessions to gauge immediate impact and satisfaction.



Timeline for State Literacy Plan Revisions (Every Two Years):

- **Year 1: Preparation & Drafting (6 months)**

Months 1-3

- Review existing State Literacy Plan.
- Gather feedback from key stakeholders (districts, educators, literacy leaders, etc.).
- Analyze data from the State Literacy Needs Assessment, local audits, and CDE data.
- Identify key areas for revision and alignment with current literacy research and practices.

Months 4-6:

- Organize focus groups or working committees.
- Develop a draft incorporating stakeholder feedback and research.

- **Year 1: Review & Refinement (4 months)**

Months 7-10:

- Share the draft plan with a broader group of stakeholders for feedback.
- Review feedback and make necessary revisions.
- Ensure alignment with equity, evidence-based practices, and scientific reading instruction.

- **Year 1: Approval & Finalization (2 months)**

Months 11-12:

- **Finalize the revised State Literacy Plan.**
- **Present the revised plan to relevant state authorities for approval.**
- **Communicate the approved plan to stakeholders and the public.**

- **Year 2: Implementation & Monitoring (Ongoing)**

Months 13-18:

- Begin implementation of the revised plan at the local level.
- Provide professional development and support to educators.
- Establish regular check-ins and progress monitoring.

- **Year 2: Evaluation & Data Collection (Months 19-24)**

Months 19-24:

- Collect data on the implementation and effectiveness of the plan.
- Review progress toward the identified literacy goals.
- Prepare for the next round of revisions based on data and stakeholder feedback.



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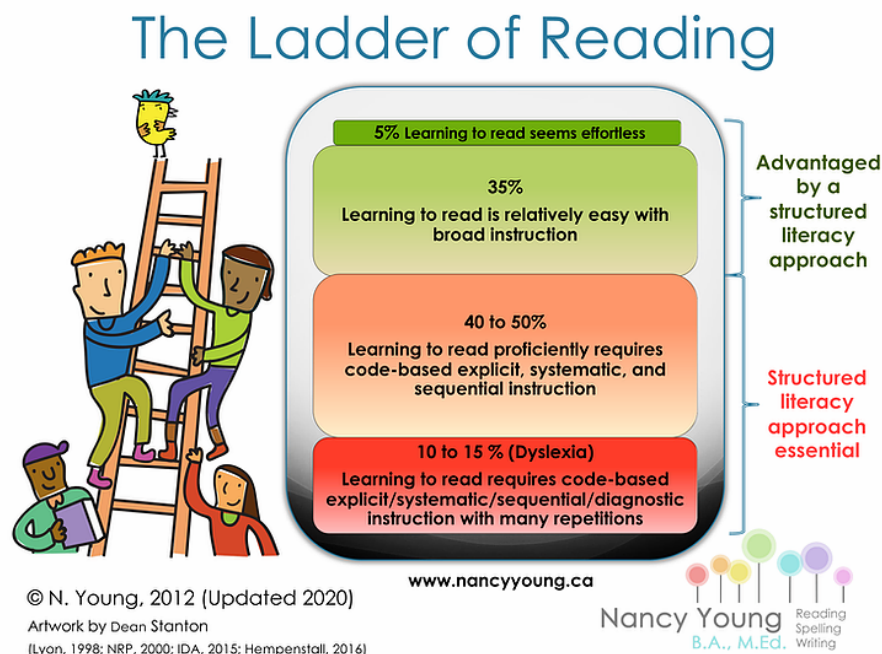
Appendices

Appendix A - Structured Literacy

What is Structured Literacy?

Structured Literacy™ is characterized by “the provision of systematic, explicit instruction that integrates listening, speaking, reading, and writing and emphasizes the structure of language across the speech sound system (phonology), the writing system (orthography), the structure of sentences (syntax), the meaningful parts of words (morphology), the relationships among words (semantics), and the organization of spoken and written discourse” (IDA, 2018).

Structured Literacy™ is not a program, but an instructional approach to teach the structure of the English language. It is based on science and evidence that supports a greater percentage of students in learning to read. Nancy Young’s (2020) infographic represents the additional number of students that can learn to read through Best First Instruction and interventions when a Structured Literacy approach is applied. The evidence indicates that Structured Literacy™ significantly increases the likelihood of children reading by grade 3.





Guiding Principles of Structured Literacy, according to International Dyslexia Association (2018, p.6)

1. Model and clearly explain new tasks or when a child is having difficulty.
2. Teach all skills and strategies of reading and writing using highly explicit instruction language and models.
3. Systematic delivery of skill instruction - moving from the simple to complex.
4. Engage in meaningful interactions with language during the lesson.
5. Provide repeated opportunities for practice.
6. Provide corrective feedback and specific positive praise.
7. Monitor and provide feedback during instruction and during independent practice.
8. Develop high levels of performance before moving to more advanced skills.

Appendix B - Chall's Stages of Reading Development

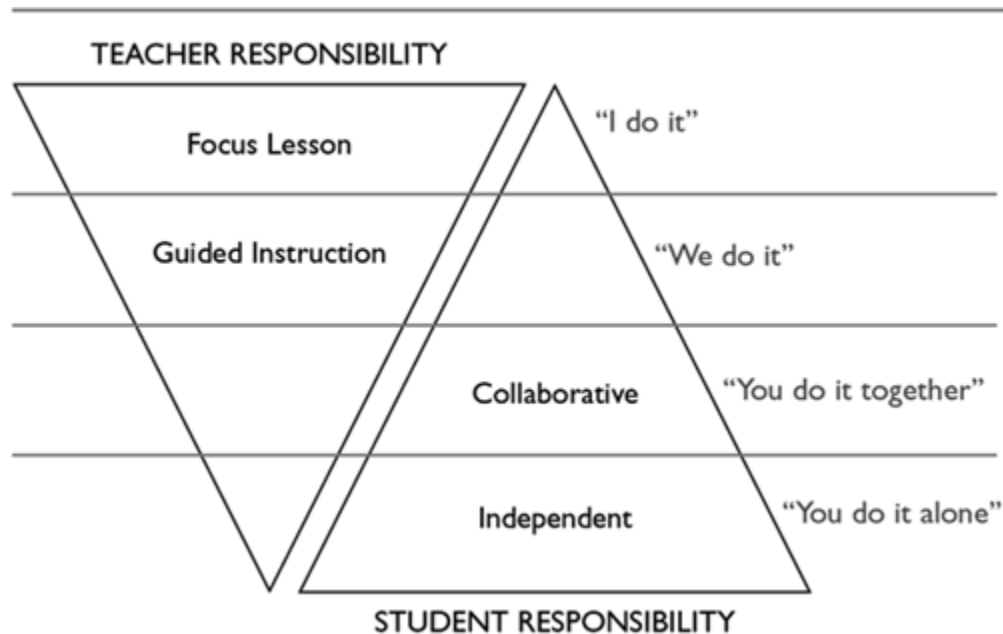
Chall's (1996) six stages of reading development as a framework, which accounts for reading development from birth to adulthood. These learners' lifespan is divided into six stages, which are summarized in the table below.

Stage, Approx. Age/Grade	Characteristics, Masteries by End of Stage	How Acquired	Relationship of Reading to Listening
Stage 0: Pre-Reading 6 mo.-6 years old Preschool	Child "pretends" to read, retells story when looking at pages of book previously read to him/her, names letters of alphabet; recognizes some signs; prints own name; plays with books, pencils and paper.	Being read to by an adult (or older child) who responds to and warmly appreciates the child's interest in books and reading; being provided with books, paper, pencils, blocks and letters. Dialogic reading.	Most can understand the children's picture books and stories read to them. They understand thousands of words they hear by age 6 but can read few, if any, of them.
Stage 1: Initial Reading and Decoding 6-7 years old 1 st grade/ beginning 2 nd grade	Child learns the relationship between letters and sounds and between printed and spoken words; child is able to read simple text containing high frequency words and phonically regular words; uses skill and insight to "sound out" new one syllable words.	Direct instruction in letter-sound relations (phonics) and practice in their use. Reading simple stories using words with phonic elements taught and words of high frequency. Being read to on a level above what a child can read independently to develop more advanced language patterns, vocabulary, and concepts.	The level of difficulty of language read by the child is much below the language understood when heard. At the end of Stage 1, most children can understand up to 4000 or more words when heard but can read about 600.
Stage 2: Confirmation and Fluency 7-8 years old 2 nd & 3 rd grade	Child read simple, familiar stories and selections with increasing fluency. This is done by consolidating the basic decoding elements, sight vocabulary, and meaning context in the reading of familiar stories and selections.	Direct instruction in advanced decoding skills; wide reading (instruction and independent levels) of familiar, interesting materials that help promote fluent reading. Being read to at levels above their own independent reading level to	At the end of Stage 2, about 3000 words can be read and understood and about 9000 are known when heard. Listening is still more effective than reading.



		develop language, vocabulary, and concepts.	
Stage 3: Reading for Learning the New 9-13 years old 4 th -9 th grade	Reading is used to learn new ideas, to gain new knowledge, to experience new feelings, to learn new attitudes, generally from one viewpoint.	Reading and study of textbooks, reference works, trade books, newspapers, and magazines that contain new ideas and values, unfamiliar vocabulary and syntax; systematic study of words and reacting to the text through discussion, answering questions, writing, etc. Reading of increasingly more complex text.	At the beginning of Stage 3, listening comprehension of the same material is still more effective than reading comprehension. By the end of Stage 3, reading and listening are about equal for those who read very well, reading may be more efficient.
Stage 4: Multiple Viewpoints 15-17 years old 10 th -12 th grade	Reading widely from a broad range of complex materials, both expository and narrative, with a variety of viewpoints.	Wide reading and study of the physical, biological and social sciences, and the humanities, high quality and popular literature, newspapers, and magazines; systematic study of words and word parts.	Reading Comprehension is better than listening comprehension of materials of difficult content and readability. For poor readers, listening comprehension may be equal to reading comprehension.
Stage 5: Construction and Reconstruction 18+ years old College & Beyond	Reading is used for one's own needs and purposes (professional and personal); reading serves to integrate one's knowledge with that of others, to synthesize it and to create new knowledge. It is rapid and efficient.	Wide reading of ever more difficult materials, reading beyond one's immediate needs; writing of papers, tests, essays, and other forms that call for integration of varied knowledge and points of view.	Reading is more efficient than listening.

Appendix C - Fisher and Frey Gradual Release Model (2013)



The gradual release of responsibility allows for students to own more of the learning as they master a concept, skill, or strategy over a period of time. When a concept, skill, or strategy is new or when students need explicit instruction, the teacher models and shows examples during the “I do” or explicit teaching segment of the lesson. During the We Do, or guided practice segment of the lesson, the teacher serves as a guide supporting the students in the application of the new learning. It is during this segment that students need lots of practice opportunities, positive praise, and corrective feedback. Based upon student performance during the guided practice, teachers make instructional decisions regarding next steps in the gradual release framework.

During the guided practice, if students struggle and are making a number of errors teachers may 1) reflect and determine that the prerequisite knowledge is not in place for students and make adjustments in their plans; 2) determine that it is necessary to go back and provide more instruction and modeling; or, 3) to continue providing supports during guided practice and not move to release more student responsibility.

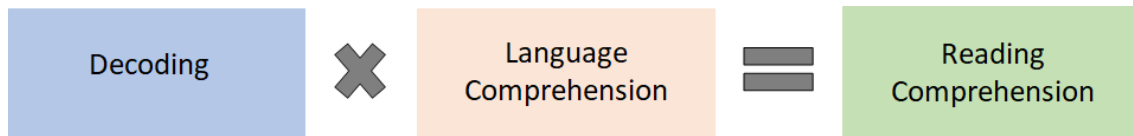


During the guided practice, if students are following along but seem to be dependent upon the teacher as a guide, the teacher may 1) determine it is beneficial to remain in guided practice; or 2) determine that students would benefit from peer support during a “Collaborative You do.”

During the guided practice, if students are following along and seem to understand there is minimal corrective feedback, the teacher may determine 1) to utilize a “Collaborative You do” to provide peer support and feedback; or 2) to release students to an “Independent You do.”

The gradual release model provides a framework for teachers to consider anecdotal evidence that is observed during the lesson and to use that data to inform instructional practices during the lesson as well as in following lessons. The goal is to provide students the support they need to while building their capacity to own more of their learning as they build towards mastery.

Appendix D - Simple View of Reading



The Simple View of Reading - Reading comprehension is the product of decoding and language comprehension. This mathematics equation reflects the understanding that to have reading comprehension a reader must be able to recognize the words on the page and then understand the meaning of the words (Gough and Tunmer, 1986). Gough and Tunmer's Simple View of Reading supports the argument that there is more to reading than decoding and language comprehension (1986). This model provides insights to reading disabilities.

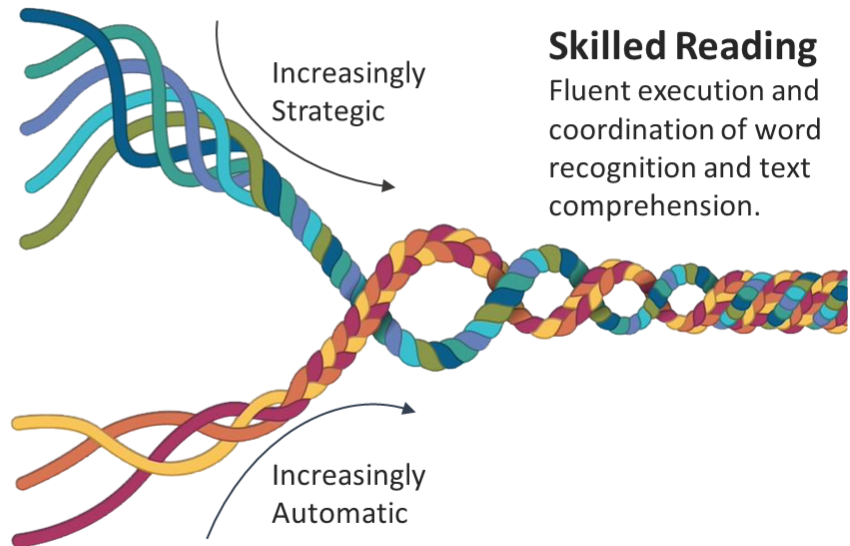
Appendix E - Scarborough's Rope

Language Comprehension

- Background Knowledge
- Vocabulary Knowledge
- Language Structures
- Verbal Reasoning
- Literacy Knowledge

Word Recognition

- Phonological Awareness
- Decoding (and Spelling)
- Sight Recognition



Scarborough, H. 2001. Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory, and practice. Pp. 97-110 in S. B. Neuman & D. K. Dickinson (Eds.) *Handbook of Early Literacy*. NY: Guilford Press.



Scarborough's Rope (2001) mirrors the Simple View of Reading by illustrating the importance of both language comprehension and word recognition. Both strands need to be developed through methodical, comprehensive, and recursive scope and sequence of skills. Each of the skills and subskills in each strand need to be explicitly taught, modeled, supported through guided practice, and applied independently. While each of the sub skills are taught and practiced in isolation, they must be connected to and practiced in text. It is a frequent and distributed practice that supports students in developing the fluent application of word recognition and language comprehension that is necessary for skilled reading.

The skills comprising word recognition need to be taught explicitly and systematically. Phonemic awareness follows a discrete developmental sequence that should guide instructional scope and sequence of skill instruction. Synthetic phonics which focuses on explicitly teaching sound symbol correspondences and uses this knowledge to read and spell words is based in science. Students must master phonemic awareness and phonics to a level of automaticity that braids the skills together so that students can automatically decode text while employing language comprehension skills and strategies to comprehend the text. Orthographic mapping, which is dependent upon automatic mapping of sound to symbol, supports automatic word recognition or reading by sight.

The rope indicates that while it is important to teach each element of language comprehension explicitly, it is equally necessary to “twist” them together with supported practice in text. Students must be able to use them together to create meaning. Solidification of the skills allows readers to strategically leverage components of language comprehension to make meaningful connections with experiences, text, and self.

Oral language is critical to supporting literacy. Academic language is taught both implicitly and explicitly. Teachers can encourage the growth of academic language by modeling academic language and incorporating opportunities for students to engage in dialogue in the classroom. As readers mature and texts become more complex, students' ability to rely on their developed oral and written language becomes more important for their comprehension. Strong oral language skills create a foundation for literacy skills, which are expanded through copious amounts of writing.

All five components of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension), with the addition of oral language and writing, are integral parts of literacy and should be taught daily during reading instruction (Moats, 2020; Scarborough, 2001). Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are the four language components that develop over time, but they do not develop consecutively or linearly. They intermingle: one supports the growth of the other. Oral language contributes to both reading and writing and writing supports

oral language development (Harlaar et al., 2008; Shanahan et al., 2006). Reading, writing, and oral language development should be supported across the curriculum and be embedded into instruction throughout the day.

Appendix F - Sedita's Writing Rope

The Strands That Are Woven Into Skilled Writing (Sedita, 2019)

Critical Thinking

- Generating ideas, gathering information
- Writing process: organizing, drafting, writing, revising

Syntax

- Grammar and syntactic awareness
- Sentence elaboration
- Punctuation

Text Structure

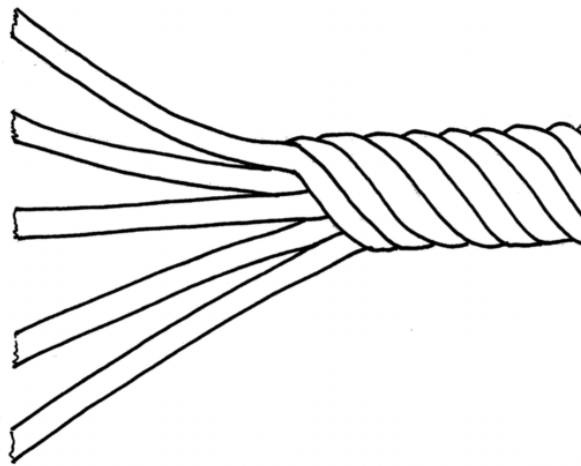
- Narrative, informational, opinion structures
- Paragraph structure
- Patterns of organization (description, sequence, cause/effect, compare/contrast, problem/solution)
- Linking and transition words/phrases

Writing Craft

- Word choice
- Awareness of task, audience purpose
- Literary devices

Transcription

- Spelling
- Handwriting, keyboarding



Writing is a complex task. It requires students to engage in “integrating multiple physical and cognitive demands, including transcription, spelling, sentence formation, idea generation and organization, and an understanding of audience, purpose, and genre” (McQuitty, 2014, p. 468). Writing affects oral language and



since writing is not explicitly taught until students enter school, oral language affects the foundations of writing (Shanahan et al., 2006).

Reading and writing engage different cognitive functions that support opportunities for new learning (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000). Writing in content areas shows comprehension and it provides a space for the reader to work through the meaning of important concepts. Explicit instruction in process writing such as prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing can also improve elementary students' writing skills because they are actively engaged in not only writing but talking about writing and listening to their own and their peers' writing (McQuitty, 2014). Students need to both read, write, and talk about reading and writing. Using writing as a tool for interaction and manipulation of ideas can support student understanding.

Sedita (2019) proposed a writing rope that identifies five components that need to be taught explicitly, practiced, and applied over time to develop as a strong writer. Writing supports critical thinking and assesses a student's understanding of new content. Writing tasks, in conjunction with reading, promotes critical thinking skills that come with writing that require the challenge of high levels of thought (Matsumura et al., 2002).

Writing Strands

Critical Thinking- When students engage in the writing process, they engage in critical thinking. They consider what they want to write about and what they should include in their writing. Students benefit from explicit instruction in employing the writing process.

Syntax - Think about grammar. When students understand sentence structures (how words are put together to form academic language) it increases their listening and reading comprehension and writing composition skills.

Text Structure- This is the understanding of text structures and organization of narrative, informational, and opinion text. Patterns found in nonfiction text based upon its purpose and paragraph structures support writing and reading comprehension.

Writing Craft- Students need explicit instruction and then repeated opportunities to hone the purposeful selection of word choice, adjusting tone and style for audience and purpose, and leveraging literary devices to enhance their writing.

Transcription- The foundation of automatic handwriting and strong sound symbol correspondence must be in place. If this foundation is not solid, students will get caught up in thinking about how to form and connect letters, words, and sentences. They will not be able to translate the thoughts to the page that are needed for advanced writing assignments. More challenging writing assignments, in conjunction with reading, promotes critical thinking skills that come with writing which require the challenge of high levels of thought (Matsumura et al., 2002).

When students engage in writing tasks, from quick writes to complete works, they hone their skill sets within each of the strands. The strands become more secure and more tightly woven with repeated opportunities to write daily.



Appendix G: District Needs Assessment

Section A.1: Needs Assessment for Local Literacy Plan - Leadership and Infrastructure

Please indicate your status in this section by selecting whether you are **excelling**, **progressing**, or **emerging** for each indicator. Answers in this section are not scored and will not affect funding decisions. Your responses will assist in developing your PK-12 local literacy plan.

1. **A Comprehensive PK-12 local literacy plan is in place for the subgrant applicant.**
 - ☐ **Excelling:** A fully integrated PK-12 literacy plan, with considerations for the specific context and culture of the learning community, features advanced teacher training, promotes high student engagement, utilizes comprehensive assessments, and emphasizes strong community involvement goals.
 - ☐ **Progressing:** A fully integrated PK-12 literacy plan with advanced teacher training, high student engagement, comprehensive assessments, and strong community involvement goals has been developed, but not fully implemented. The literacy plan may not consider the specific context and culture of the learning community.
 - ☐ **Emerging:** An integrated PK-12 literacy plan with advanced teacher training, high student engagement, comprehensive assessments, and strong community involvement goals has not been developed.
2. **The applicant has a literacy leadership team in place.**
 - ☐ **Excelling:** The applicant has a well-established literacy leadership team in place, comprising knowledgeable and experienced members. The team meets regularly to collaboratively develop and implement comprehensive literacy strategies, monitor progress, and adjust initiatives as needed to support student success across all grade levels.
 - ☐ **Progressing:** The applicant has formed a literacy leadership team, which meets periodically to discuss literacy initiatives and strategies. Roles and responsibilities are being defined, and initial plans are being developed.
 - ☐ **Emerging:** The applicant has identified a need for a literacy leadership team but has not yet established one or has just started the process.
3. **Applicant has strong literacy leadership and engages in effective guidance for instructional staff.**
 - ☐ **Excelling:** Organization and school leaders at all grade levels possess a deep understanding of reading acquisition and evidence-based instructional practices. Leaders provide clarity when needed and engage in informed decision-making. There is a unified voice on literacy matters.
 - ☐ **Progressing:** Some leaders possess a deep understanding of reading acquisition and evidence-based instructional practices. Literacy expertise has not been developed by leaders serving all grades. A unified voice and comprehensive expertise are in progress but still needed.
 - ☐ **Emerging:** There is limited understanding of reading acquisition and evidence-based instructional practices among district and school leaders; clarity and informed decision-making are inconsistent, and a unified voice on literacy matters is lacking.
4. **Applicant has cultivated a culture of learning for staff.**
 - ☐ **Excelling:** The applicant has successfully established a robust culture of learning for staff, with comprehensive and targeted professional development programs, strong support for continuous



improvement, and a collaborative environment that promotes innovation and excellence. Staff is included in decision making and feels confident and comfortable in new learning.

- ☐ **Progressing:** The applicant is actively cultivating a culture of learning for staff, providing regular professional development opportunities and encouraging ongoing learning and skill enhancement. Staff is not included in decision making and may feel uncomfortable or challenged in adapting to new learning experiences.
- ☐ **Emerging:** The applicant is beginning to foster a culture of learning among staff, with sporadic professional development opportunities and limited encouragement for continuous improvement. Staff may experience discomfort or struggle with new learning initiatives, indicating a need for more structured support and encouragement.

5. **Applicant has a strong data-based decision-making system in place, including driving instructional decisions.**

- ☐ **Excelling:** Applicant has a robust data-based decision-making system in place, including consistent scheduling of data teams meetings. Data is effectively utilized to drive instruction and continuously improve student outcomes.
- ☐ **Progressing:** Applicant has a data-based decision-making system in place, but scheduling of data teams meetings may be inconsistent. Data is used to inform instruction but may not be pinpointing specific student skill deficits. Efforts to improve student outcomes are ongoing.
- ☐ **Emerging:** Applicant has a limited or underdeveloped data-based decision-making system, with irregular scheduling of data teams meetings. Data is frequently limited to composite score levels, and its use for instructional purposes and student improvement is minimal or ineffective.

6. **The applicant has established comprehensive literacy goals aimed at enhancing student outcomes.**

- ☐ **Excelling:** Applicant has developed goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timebound (SMART).
- ☐ **Progressing:** Applicant has developed goals that have most of the elements of a SMART goal, but not all.
- ☐ **Emerging:** Applicant has developed goals that lack SMART goal elements or goals have not yet been developed.

7. **Goals address reading progress for all grade levels represented in the system.**

- ☐ **Excelling:** Clear and measurable goals for reading progress are set across all grade levels, closely aligned with student needs and curriculum standards. Goals are regularly monitored and adjusted to ensure continuous improvement in student reading outcomes.
- ☐ **Progressing:** Goals for reading progress are established for all grade levels or may be missing from some grade levels, generally aligned with student needs and curriculum standards, but they may lack specificity or measurable outcomes.
- ☐ **Emerging:** Goals for reading progress are inconsistently set across grade levels and/or may have minimal alignment to student needs and curriculum standards.



Section A.2: Needs Assessment for Local Literacy Plan - Professional Development and Instruction

Please indicate your status in this section by selecting whether you are excelling, progressing, or emerging for each indicator. Answers in this section are not scored and will not affect funding decisions. Your responses will assist in developing your PK-12 local literacy plan.

1. **The applicant offers comprehensive professional development for educators and leaders across all levels from PK-12th grade.**
 - ☐ **Excelling:** The applicant has established a robust and well-structured professional development framework for educators and leaders from PK-12. PD encompasses advanced training in the science of reading instruction, effective writing pedagogy, language development strategies, comprehensive support for diverse learners, and data-driven instruction and differentiation. This initiative is consistently updated and aligned with current educational research and best practices.
 - ☐ **Progressing:** The applicant has implemented a comprehensive professional development program for educators and leaders, covering essential areas such as reading instruction, writing pedagogy, language development, support for diverse learners, and data-driven differentiation strategies. Some efforts are needed to ensure PD offerings are available for educators at all grade levels and cover all relevant topics.
 - ☐ **Emerging:** The applicant is currently developing professional development or is in the initial stages of planning opportunities for educators and leaders across all levels and relevant topics.
2. **Professional development is aligned with the applicant's data and goals.**
 - ☐ **Excelling:** PD activities are consistently and comprehensively aligned with the applicant's data and goals, with regular reviews ensuring continued alignment. There is a robust system in place that measures the significant positive impact of PD on student achievement and staff performance, with all relevant stakeholders actively involved in planning and evaluation.
 - ☐ **Progressing:** PD activities are generally aligned with the applicant's data and goals, though there may be occasional gaps. Mechanisms exist to monitor the impact of PD, but results may be variable and not consistently analyzed. Some stakeholders are involved in the planning process, though their input may be limited.
 - ☐ **Emerging:** PD activities show some alignment with the applicant's data and goals, but this alignment is inconsistent. There is little evidence of PD's impact on student achievement or staff performance, no formal measurement system exists, and/or stakeholder involvement in the planning and evaluation process is minimal.
3. **Professional development is designed for a high classroom implementation rate.**
 - ☐ **Excelling:** Professional development includes a balanced combination of outside-the-classroom sessions that present theory, demonstrate practices, and offer feedback opportunities, alongside robust, ongoing in-classroom coaching. This approach ensures that teachers not only gain knowledge but also effectively implement new practices with students, leading to significant improvements in classroom practice and student outcomes.
 - ☐ **Progressing:** Professional development primarily consists of outside-the-classroom sessions focusing on theory, practice demonstrations, and feedback. While this approach improves teacher knowledge, it has

limited impact on actual classroom practice, and in-classroom coaching is implemented sporadically, leading to some improvement in practice implementation with students.

- **Emerging:** Professional development is mostly limited to outside-the-classroom sessions that present theory and demonstrate practices with minimal opportunities for feedback. This approach leads to increased teacher knowledge but does not significantly impact classroom practice. Or there may be a lack of professional development opportunities overall.

4. Literacy Instruction is aligned with up-to-date research.

- **Excelling:** Literacy instruction is fully aligned with the latest research on language, reading, and writing, incorporating evidence-based practices consistently across all grade levels. Teachers have access to high-quality, research-aligned curricular resources, eliminating the need to create their own materials.
- **Excelling:** Literacy instruction is fully aligned with the latest research on language, reading, and writing, incorporating evidence-based practices consistently across all grade levels. Teachers have access to high-quality, research-aligned curricular resources, eliminating the need to create their own materials.
- **Emerging:** Literacy instruction inconsistent in alignment with current research on language, reading, and writing, with outdated practices still in use and infrequent updates. Teachers at some grade levels lack access to high-quality, research-aligned curricular resources, resulting in frequent creation of their own materials.

5. Literacy Instruction across grade levels includes a comprehensive scope of essential skills and systems are in place for vertical alignment.

- **Excelling:** Literacy instruction across grades comprehensively covers essential skills including reading, spelling, handwriting, written expression, language development, knowledge building, and critical thinking skills, ensuring a holistic approach to literacy and academic growth.
- **Progressing:** Literacy instruction covers reading, spelling, handwriting, written expression, language development, knowledge building, and critical thinking skills across grades to some extent, but the coverage may not consistently ensure mastery in all areas.
- **Emerging:** Literacy instruction offers incomplete coverage of skills across grades, revealing trends where students may not receive adequate instruction in specific skill areas.

6. Systems for individualized student support and differentiation are in place.

- **Excelling:** Teachers demonstrate comprehensive knowledge and understanding of meeting individual student needs, including those of students with disabilities, students of various cultures, and multilingual students, through effective differentiated instruction, consistently and effectively employed. Support and differentiation for students are well documented and follows the student.
- **Progressing:** Teachers show some understanding of meeting individual student needs, including those of students with disabilities, students of various cultures, and multilingual students, through differentiated instruction. Differentiated instruction strategies are utilized to some extent, but their effectiveness in meeting diverse learning needs may vary.
- **Emerging:** Teachers demonstrate limited understanding of meeting individual student needs, including those of students with disabilities, students of various cultures, and multilingual students, and how to effectively differentiate instruction. The applicant is in the process or planning stages of developing systems and professional development opportunities for teachers in these critical areas.

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7. **Technology is used appropriately to support and/or accelerate student learning and is aligned with the instructional focus.**
- ☐ **Excelling:** When technology is used for instruction or practice, it seamlessly supports, ensures access to content, and/or accelerates student learning, fully aligned with instructional focus. A technology standards framework is in place and ensures appropriate implementation, with ongoing data collection and analysis to track program effectiveness and guide continuous improvement and personalized learning strategies.
 - ☐ **Progressing:** When technology is used, it supports and accelerates student learning and is generally aligned with the instructional focus. A technology standards framework is not in place or is being developed. There are some efforts to collect and use data to evaluate the effectiveness of technology programs, but these practices may not be consistent or comprehensive.
 - ☐ **Emerging:** When technology is used to support and accelerate student learning, its application is minimal and not consistently aligned with the instructional focus. Data collection and analysis to track the effectiveness of technology programs are infrequent or nonexistent.
8. **The applicant performs at a high level, with student proficiency data consistently exceeding the statewide average across multiple grade levels.**
- ☐ **Excelling:** Student proficiency data consistently exceeds the statewide average across all measured grades (third-grade CMAS: 42.1%, fifth-grade CMAS: 47.3%, eighth-grade CMAS: 42.8%, and eleventh-grade Reading and Writing SAT: 57.6%) on statewide assessments. Strong systems are in place to sustain this performance, with evidence of continuous improvement practices ensuring alignment with instructional priorities and targeted supports.
 - ☐ **Progressing:** Student proficiency data is higher than the statewide average for at least two measured grades (third-grade CMAS: 42.1%, fifth-grade CMAS: 47.3%, eighth-grade CMAS: 42.8%, and eleventh-grade Reading and Writing SAT: 57.6%). Efforts are underway to address areas of uneven performance through targeted interventions and data-informed instructional adjustments.
 - ☐ **Emerging:** Student outcome proficiency data occasionally exceeds the statewide average for certain grades but lacks consistency across all measured grades. Systems to analyze and address proficiency gaps are developing.
9. **Professional development opportunities are offered to all educators involved in literacy instruction.**
- ☐ **Excelling:** Comprehensive professional development opportunities are consistently extended to all educators, including grade-level teachers, special education teachers, interventionists, SLPs, ELD teachers, paraprofessional support staff, and long-term substitutes. Training aligns with instructional priorities and is tailored to meet diverse staff needs.
 - ☐ **Progressing:** Professional development opportunities are offered to most educators, including grade-level teachers, special education teachers, and interventionists. Efforts are being made to align training with instructional goals and expand access to all roles.
 - ☐ **Emerging:** Professional development opportunities are limited and primarily focused on general educator roles, with minimal inclusion of special educators, paraprofessional support staff, and/or long-term substitutes. Training alignment with instructional priorities and accessibility for all staff is still in development.
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Section A.3: Needs Assessment for Local Literacy Plan - Partnerships and Family Engagement

Please indicate your status in this section by selecting whether you are excelling, progressing, or emerging for each indicator. Answers in this section are not scored and will not affect funding decisions. Your responses will assist in developing your PK-12 local literacy plan.

1. **The applicant has established effective partnerships, collaboration, and communication internally among departments and teams.**
 - ☐ **Excelling:** Teams consistently collaborate across departments, with clear, frequent communication involving all stakeholders including various grade level, special education, interventionist, SLPs, ELD teachers, etc. This strong partnership results in a cohesive, aligned approach to literacy instruction and measurable improvements in student outcomes.
 - ☐ **Progressing:** Departments collaborate regularly, though it may be informal or less structured. Communication is generally effective, but occasional gaps or inconsistencies exist. Partnerships are developing, with increasing alignment and shared goals, though full coordination is still in progress.
 - ☐ **Emerging:** Collaboration between departments and teams is sporadic, often driven by immediate needs rather than strategic planning. Communication is inconsistent, possibly leading to misunderstandings and misalignments in literacy instruction. Partnerships are in the early stages, with departments working independently and goals not yet fully aligned.
2. **Library services are fully integrated in the applicant's literacy plan.**
 - ☐ **Excelling:** The applicant has fully integrated school library services into the local literacy plan and consistently includes school librarians in all literacy conversations and planning. Regular collaborative programs between teachers and librarians promote a cohesive approach to literacy across the district.
 - ☐ **Progressing:** The applicant has partially included school library services in the local literacy plan, with school librarians occasionally involved in literacy conversations and planning. Initial collaborative efforts between teachers and librarians exist but are not fully developed or consistently applied across all schools.
 - ☐ **Emerging:** The applicant's integration of school library services into the local literacy plan is minimal, with school librarians rarely involved in literacy conversations and planning. Collaborative efforts between teachers and librarians are infrequent and lack effective structure.
3. **The applicant has established strong community partnerships.**
 - ☐ **Excelling:** The applicant consistently establishes and maintains robust partnerships with diverse community organizations, including the local public library, community centers, after-school programs, cultural institutions, local colleges or universities, and other relevant entities. These partnerships result in collaborative programs and initiatives that benefit students, such as joint educational workshops, literacy programs, and extracurricular activities.
 - ☐ **Progressing:** The applicant is actively expanding its partnerships with community organizations, with some initial collaborative efforts already in place, such as occasional joint events or shared resources.
 - ☐ **Emerging:** The applicant's efforts to partner with community organizations have been limited or sporadic. While there are occasional collaborations with community organizations, they are not consistently developed or sustained over time.



4. Out-of-school learning opportunities are available.

- ☐ **Excelling:** Students have consistent access to diverse out-of-school educational opportunities at all grade levels. Activities are provided by the applicant or provided through a community partnerships, and include programs such as tutoring, summer school, book clubs, family literacy nights, summer reading, and reading buddy programs.
- ☐ **Progressing:** Students have some access to consistent out-of-school educational opportunities. They may not be consistently available across all student demographics or geographic areas. Efforts are being made to expand these opportunities.
- ☐ **Emerging:** Access to out-of-school educational opportunities provided by the applicant or community partner is limited or sporadic. While there are some initiatives in place, such as occasional programs or partnerships, they may not reach all students equally, and efforts to expand access are ongoing.

5. Caregivers and community members are informed of the applicant's literacy strategies, progress, and goals.

- ☐ **Excelling:** Parents and community members are regularly informed of the applicant's literacy strategies, progress, and goals through multiple channels. There are structured opportunities for them to provide feedback and actively participate in literacy planning and initiatives.
- ☐ **Progressing:** Parents and community members are informed of the applicant's literacy strategies, progress, and goals through periodic updates. There are some opportunities for feedback, but these may not be consistent or widely promoted.
- ☐ **Emerging:** Information about the applicant's literacy strategies, progress, and goals is sporadically or not shared with parents and community members. Opportunities for providing feedback are minimal or nonexistent.

6. Effective communication with caregivers is in place at all grade levels in the preferred language of caregivers.

- ☐ **Excelling:** When students encounter challenges, parents are promptly informed through effective communication channels, and they have easy access to information on how to support their child and navigate the intervention process within the school/district. This takes place at all grade levels, including upper grades.
- ☐ **Progressing:** Communication channels for informing parents about student challenges at all grade levels are developing. Access to information on supporting their child or navigating interventions may be inconsistent or difficult for parents to understand, and not all community languages are covered. There is an ongoing effort to improve family involvement in literacy.
- ☐ **Emerging:** Communication about student challenges primarily occurs through READ plan requirements. Information for parents on supporting their child or navigating interventions is inconsistent, not readily available, or difficult to understand, and/or communication is only in English. Efforts to enhance family involvement in literacy are underway, but resources and clarity remain limited.

7. The applicant creates meaningful opportunities for family engagement through literacy activities.

- ☐ **Excelling:** Meaningful opportunities for family engagement in literacy activities are established across all grade levels through events, workshops, community partnerships, and other events or activities at school or in the community.

- **Progressing:** The range of literacy enrichment activities offered to families is somewhat limited, potentially limiting engagement effectiveness. Activities may be focused at younger grade bands, but are lacking for middle and high school students.
- **Emerging:** Literacy enrichment activities for families are repetitive, limited in scope, or nonexistent, lacking variety or adaptation to diverse family needs.

Needs Assessment Results		
Leadership and Infrastructure Questions		
Question 1: Literacy Plan		
Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Excelling 3
Question 2: Literacy Leadership		
Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Excelling 3
Question 3: Effective Staff Guidance		
Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Excelling 3
Question 4: Culture of Learning		
Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Excelling 3
Question 5: Data-Based Decision Making		
Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Excelling 3
Question 6: Established Goals		
Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Excelling 3
Question 7: Goals Represent All Ages		
Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Excelling 3
Total Points Leadership and Infrastructure:		
Emerging <14	Progressing 14-17	Excelling 18-21
Professional Development and Instruction Questions		
Question 1: Instruction Aligned to Research		
Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Excelling 3
Question 2: Vertical Alignment		
Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Excelling 3
Question 3: Individualized Student Support		
Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Excelling 3



Question 4: Appropriate Use of Technology		
Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Excelling 3
Question 5: Student Proficiency Data		
Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Excelling 3
Question 6: PK-12 Professional Development		
Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Excelling 3
Question 7: PD Inclusion of All Educators		
Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Excelling 3
Question 8: PD Aligned with Data & Goals		
Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Excelling 3
Question 9: Designed for Classroom Implementation		
Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Excelling 3
Total Points Professional Development and Instruction:		
Emerging 18-22	Progressing 23-27	Excelling 28-32
Partnership and Family Engagement Questions		
Question 1: Internal Partners		
Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Excelling 3
Question 2: Library Services		
Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Excelling 3
Question 3: Community Partners		
Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Excelling 3
Question 4: Out-of-School Learning Opportunities		
Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Excelling 3
Question 5: Communication of Literacy Plan and Goals		
Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Excelling 3
Question 6: Caregiver Communication		
Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Excelling 3
Question 7: Family Engagement		
Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Excelling 3



Comprehensive Statewide Literacy Plan

Total Points Partnership and Family Engagement:		
Emerging <14	Progressing 14-17	Excelling 18-21
Leadership and Infrastructure Rating:		
Professional Development and Instruction Rating:		
Partnership and Family Engagement Rating:		