Office of the
State Superintendent
of Education

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY PLAN

LITERACY DC

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTRIBUTORS

Annette Thacker-Bartlett
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Special Assistant

Angela Awonaike
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Response to Intervention Specialist

Anika E. Harris JD
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
English Language Acquisition Professional Development Specialist

Annie Karabell
American University
Professor Lecturer, School of Education

April N. Hinnant M. Ed
District of Columbia Schools
Kindergarten Teacher

Ashleigh C. Tillman M. Ed
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Literacy Specialist

Ayanna Kelley-Stephens M. Ed.
University of the District of Columbia
Clinical Instructor and Program Director of Education

Bess Davis
Paul Public Charter School
English Language Arts Instructional Specialist

Buen Abo
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Education Program Specialist

Chandi Wagner MPAff
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Data Analysis Manager

Christina M. Beal M.P.P.
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Director, College and Career Readiness

Danielle Branson
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Director of Assessments

Deanna Santoro Ed.D.
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Assessment Specialist

Dione Oliver Ed.D.
H.D. Woodson
12th Grade English Language Arts Teacher

Elizabeth Ross
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Director of Human Capitol

Jacqueline Roche
D.C. Reading Clinic
Coordinator

Jennifer C. Norton Ed. D
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Manager of English Learner Supports

Josie Malone
District of Columbia Public Schools
Manager of Secondary ELA

Katharine W. Noonan
Garrison Elementary School (DCPS)
ELA Instructional Coach

Dr. Kristian Lenderman
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
State Personnel Development Grant Program Manager

Kristin R. Spivey EdS CCC-SLP
Two Rivers Public Charter School
Speech Language Pathologist

La' Shawndra C. Scroggins Ph.D.
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Director, Teaching and Learning

Lauren E. Chisholm
Apple Tree Institute for Education Innovation
Director of Implementation

Lindsay Boyer
KIPP DC
Connect Academy, Pre-K3 Teacher

Mary Clayman
DC Reading Clinic
Director

Melody Maitland
DC International School
Chief of Staff

Moira Evans
Washington Yu Ying PCS
Intervention Coordinator

Natasha Taylor
Center City Public Charter Schools
Curriculum and Instruction Specialist

Norah Rabiah
Maury Elementary, DCPS
Reading Specialist

Peter Dewitz Ph.D
Harvard Graduate School of Education
Visiting Research Fellow

Robert O. Yates
DC Public Schools
Manager of English Language Arts, Curriculum and Professional Development

Santiago Sanchez
Office of State of Superintendent of Education
Multilingual Specialist

Sarah Irvine Belson Ph.D.
American University
Professor

Shavonne Gibson
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Assistant Superintendent- Teaching and Learning

Sola Zaccheus Ed.S
Hurley and Associates LLC
Quality Facilitator

Suzanne Brooks
Washington Global Public Charter School
Director of Specialized Programs

T. Elizabeth Baird-Thompson
DCPS Central Office
Manager, Curriculum and Professional Development

Teoshi Edwards
Friendship Public Charter School
Reading Specialist

Victor G. Martinez
Hendley Elementary School
Teacher

Sara Mead
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Assistant Superintendent of Early Learning

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Among the many goals we have set for our schools, enabling children to become proficient readers may be one of the most crucial tasks. Acquiring literacy skills is a key educational outcome that also unlocks the world for children by allowing them to encounter new ideas and information, communicate with others, and express themselves effectively in school and daily life.

This plan does not seek to offer a one-size-fits all prescription to be applied across the District's diverse learning environments. Rather it offers guidance and describes and illustrates best practices related to literacy. It outlines the District's aspirations for what high-quality, evidence-based literacy experiences could look like and, more importantly, what it would mean for all children to have these sorts of experiences. Created as part of the District of Columbia's Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant, this CLP seeks to provide a roadmap or guide that local educational agencies (LEAs), schools, and early childhood programs can use to develop their own local literacy plans that are grounded in evidence-based practices and customized to the unique community contexts and instructional approaches of the District's culturally- and linguistically-diverse schools and early learning programs.

This plan was developed by a working group of nearly 50 District educators and literacy experts representing diverse perspectives and professional expertise, including classroom teachers in schools and early learning programs ranging from birth through postsecondary; school and LEA administrators from both District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and the public charter sector; literacy and instructional coaches; academic researchers; and staff from the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). Working in nine subcommittees focused on specific age ranges or student populations, these working group members reviewed the research and evidence-based literacy practices, outlined a portrait of a reader at each developmental stage, identified useful tools and resources, and drafted relevant sections of the plan.

To provide a guide and resource for early learning programs, school and LEA staff, and the public, this plan proceeds in the following fashion:

- **SECTION 1:** INTRODUCTION
- **SECTION 2:** LITERACY INSTRUCTION
  - LITERACY INSTRUCTION: BIRTH THROUGH AGE 5
  - STATE LEARNING STANDARDS FOR GRADES K-12
  - LITERACY INSTRUCTION: GRADES K-5
  - LITERACY INSTRUCTION: GRADES 6-12
- **SECTION 3:** MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORTS FOR LITERACY
- **SECTION 4:** EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES FOR LITERACY
- **SECTION 5:** DIVERSE LEARNERS
  - SUPPORTS FOR MULTILINGUAL AND ENGLISH LEARNERS
  - SPECIAL EDUCATION CONSIDERATIONS
  - READING DIFFICULTIES
  - DYSLEXIA
- **SECTION 6:** COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT AND PROGRESS MONITORING
- **SECTION 7:** PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT

The District of Columbia defines ***literacy*** as:

the ability to talk, listen, read and write leading to the ability to communicate and learn. It is a combination of skills in vocabulary, receptive and expressive language, phonological awareness, knowledge of print, comprehension and printed materials.

Literacy skills develop from birth through adulthood and support individuals in their daily activities both inside and outside school. At every point along the cradle to career educational continuum, age-appropriate language and literacy skills form the foundation for learning across all educational domains. Learning to read by third grade is a predictor of later school success and helps make acquisition of further knowledge possible (Hernandez, 2012). As learners progress through schooling and into the workforce, literacy is key to achieving self-sufficiency. In our information and digital era, an individual's ability to navigate text, communicate in writing, and assess sources of information is essential to successfully navigating the world and meeting many of our basic needs. Communications competencies including reading, writing and speaking are in high-demand across the labor market and are required for 90 percent of future jobs (Carnevale, Fasules, and Campbell, 2020). Adults with strong literacy skills are much less likely to earn low wages or be dependent on public benefits than those with low literacy skills (Wood, 2010). Literacy also provides many of the experiences that enable individuals and communities to build meaning, live together and thrive: reading a book to a child, sending a message of care or concern to a loved one, encountering sacred texts, learning to see through the eyes of those whose beliefs and perspectives may differ from our own.

However, for too many District residents and students, these essential skills—and the joy and opportunities they confer—remain elusive. The Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), a survey of adult skills sponsored by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), found that 22 percent of District residents had literacy skills at the lowest levels of proficiency (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). Although many adults who live in the District completed their education elsewhere, or many decades ago, data on the literacy skills of students enrolled in District schools today suggests that literacy proficiency remains a challenge.

The District has made considerable progress improving student outcomes over the past decade, with gains on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) exceeding those of most other states. Although the District continues to make progress in most areas measured by NAEP, reading scores for District students were statistically flat in fourth grade from 2017 to 2019; while District students made real growth in eighth grade reading, progress in reading for District eighth graders has been less than in math (Nation's Report Card, 2019).

More troubling, significant gaps still exist between students experiencing disadvantages, students of color, students with disabilities and English learners, compared to their peers not in these subgroups. In 2019, only 27.9 percent of Black/African American students and 37.5 percent of Hispanic/Latino students met or exceeded expectations on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) English language arts (ELA) assessment, compared to 84.8 percent of white students. In addition, only 9.8 percent of students with disabilities met or exceeded expectations. Just 20.2 percent of students identified as English learners met or exceeded expectations on PARCC ELA. And only 21.3 percent of students identified as "at risk" (a group that includes students who are homeless, in foster care, in families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or support through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or one or more years behind in high school) met or exceeded expectations in reading. These results suggest that, among these populations of students, far too few are experiencing the kinds of literacy learning and success necessary to access opportunities and fulfill their potential.

The roots of literacy are laid early—from children's earliest moments, and well before they enter school. And so, too, do literacy inequities begin early. According to findings from the Early Development Instrument (EDI), a holistic, population based tool used to measure children's ability to meet age appropriate developmental expectations at school entry, only 44 percent of percent of District pre-K learners are considered "on-track" in the language and cognition domain, which includes language and early literacy skills, compared to 78-83 percent of children on track across the other developmental domains assessed by the EDI (UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families, and Communities, 2020). These data suggest that many children aren't gaining the rich language and early literacy experiences—either in home or in early care and education programs—that lay the foundations for later literacy.

It doesn't have to be this way. Children's attainment (or nonattainment) of literacy is neither the unavoidable outcome of innate aptitudes nor an inscrutable mystery beyond our understanding. Rather, through decades of research—from across multiple fields including child and human development, linguistics, neuroscience, cognitive science and special education—scientists have developed a substantial body of research that enables us to understand what happens in the brain when children and adults engage in language and literacy tasks; the component skills and knowledge that compose literacy; how the brain acquires these language and literacy skills; and the instructional practices and learning experiences that enable children to master those skills (National Reading Panel, 2000; National Research Panel, 1998; Wolf, 2007). Crucially, this evidence also indicates that, with appropriate instruction and supports, even children and adults who struggle with literacy can become successful readers.

The District of Columbia's Comprehensive Literacy Plan (CLP) seeks to move the District, its schools, early childhood programs, educators and communities toward a reality in which all learners receive the effective literacy instruction and evidence-based interventions they need in order to become successful readers and all educators have the professional learning and supports they need to deliver effective instruction and evidence-based interventions.

The **Vision for Literacy** in the District of Columbia is that all learners ages birth through grade 12 will have access to high-quality literacy instruction and early experiences.

The **Guiding Principles for Literacy** provide guidance on the implementation of the District's Literacy Vision. To achieve this vision, the following conditions must be in place for all learners:

1. **INCLUSIVE INSTRUCTION:** All learners should have access to an equitable, culturally and linguistically responsive, high-quality literacy curriculum and learning environment.

2. **ASSESSMENT:** High-quality literacy instruction must be accompanied by a comprehensive, standards-aligned formative and summative assessment system that is accessible to all learners, including students with disabilities and English learners.

3. **MULTI-TIERED SUPPORTS:** Using a multi-tiered framework, LEAs, schools, and early care and educational settings provides proactive, data-driven systems and structures that support prevention, early identification, and literacy interventions to support all learners, including students with disabilities and English learners.

4. **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING:** Educators, administrators, teacher educators, and school/program staff must have access to on-going and embedded professional learning opportunities aligned to evidence- and research-based practices and adult learning theory to improve literacy outcomes for all students, including students with disabilities and English learners.

This CLP reflects the District's commitment to and belief that all children—across all the District's diversity of communities, families, cultures, languages and abilities—have the capacity to and can, with the right instruction and supports, become successful readers.

SECTION 2: LITERACY INSTRUCTION

> "The whole world opened up to me when I learned to read."
>
> - Mary McLeod Bethune

"The whole world opened up to me when I learned to read." Mary McLeod Bethune reminds us of the power that exists within educational spaces and the impact learning has on the futures of all learners. Literacy sparks curiosity, wisdom and adventure. Reading gives learners a window into the world and into their futures. Because reading is a foundational life skill that unlocks access to learning across all other content areas, it is imperative that all educators leverage a literacy framework that includes both 1) evidence-based strategies and 2) culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogy.

THE SCIENCE OF READING

The District's Comprehensive Literacy Plan (CLP) highlights three main research-based theoretical frameworks for reading instruction that are proven to increase student achievement while also improving teacher practice in literacy:

1. The Simple View of Reading, developed by Philip Gough and William Tunmer
2. The Six Stages of Reading Development, developed by Jeanne Chall
3. Scarborough's Reading Rope, developed by Hollis Scarborough

The Simple View of Reading (SVR) is a theoretical framework that defines the skills contributing to the early stages of reading comprehension. According to Gough and Tunmer (1986) reading comprehension is achieved when you pair two main skills: decoding (accurate and fluent word reading) and language comprehension (understanding the meaning of the words).

DECODING (D) **X** **LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION (LC)** **=** **READING COMPREHENSION (RC)**

(Learning to Read: The Simple View of Reading from the National Center on Improving Literacy)

Learning to decode and comprehend language does not develop naturally, it requires formal, systematic instruction in both word reading and comprehension starting as early as preschool. In order to support accurate and fluent word reading, the beginning stages of literacy instruction must support the development of:

- **Visual acuity** or the ability to see each letter and the word clearly;
- **Auditory perception** or the ability to produce the sound of each letter and understand what is heard; and
- **Cognitive skills** where individual sounds (phonemes) are put together to pronounce the word.

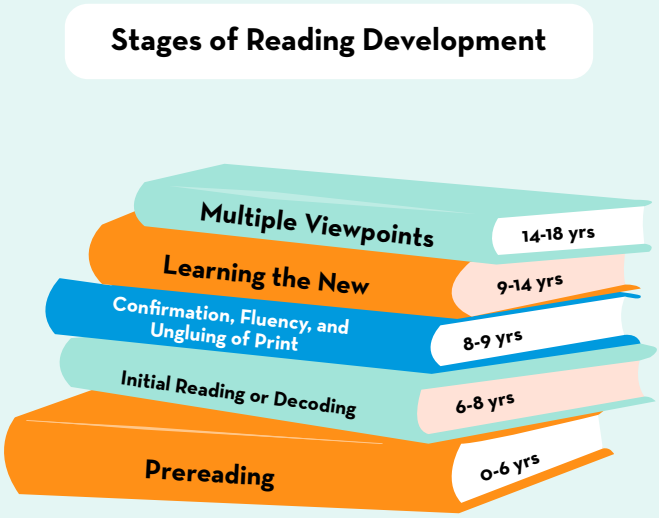
Reading words accurately with increased fluency helps set the stage for figuring out what the text means. Repetitive practice supports development and the beginning of reading words for meaning thus strengthening comprehension. In addition to the visual and auditory repetition, background knowledge on a topic further supports a student's ability to read for meaning. If a learner understands the "why" of a topic or subject, their ability to comprehend the text is increased.

According to Reading Rockets (2019), the SVR formula and research say that a learner's reading comprehension can be predicted when we know their abilities to both decode and comprehend language. Educators who leverage SVR framework to support students' reading achievement should keep these considerations in mind:

- The SVR formula makes clear that strong reading comprehension cannot occur unless both decoding skills and language comprehension abilities are strong.
- Intervention for struggling readers is effective only when it addresses the student's specific weakness, which may be decoding, language comprehension, or both.
- Decoding and language comprehension skills are separable for both assessment and teaching, although both are required to achieve reading comprehension.
- SVR is supported by scientific research.

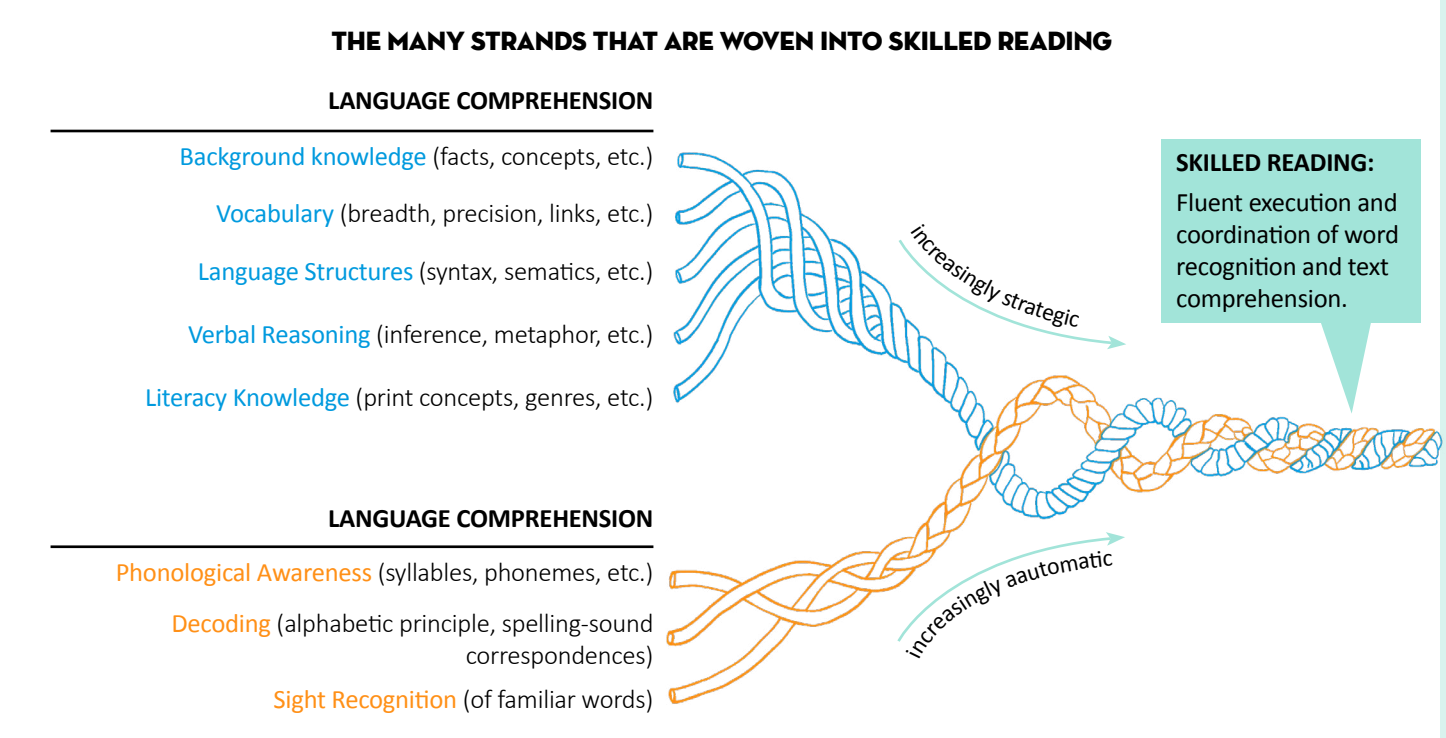
Ultimately, leveraging the SVR formula will support educators in not only understanding *how* students learn to read, but also *how to support* students if they are showing deficiencies in one or both areas of the formula. See the Professional Learning and Teacher Development section of this document for strategies around supporting educators in leveraging this framework.

The Six Stages of Reading Development is a framework developed by Jeanne Chall (1983) who believed that learners needed a blended learning approach to develop as readers. Chall argues that students not only need a foundation in explicit and direct phonics instruction, but they also need to participate in reading rich environments to deepen knowledge and thought. As such, she developed the Chall's Stages of Reading Development to support the notion that in every stage learners have benchmarks that illustrate their progress on reading development. Each stage clearly outlines an age range, mastery characteristics, how to reach mastery and the correlation between reading and listening. (From the Stages of Reading Development, here)



Chall's Stages of Reading Development

STAGE		AGE	KEY CHARACTERISTICS
0	Pre-reading and pseudo-reading	Up to 6	Pretend reading, turning pages. Some letter recognition, especially letters in own name. Often predicting stories and words.
1	Initial reading and decoding	6-7	Reading simple texts containing high frequency lexis. Chail estimated about 600 words understood.
2	Confirmation and fluency	7-8	Reading more quickly, accurately, playing more attention to meaning of words. How many written words understood? 3,000.
3	Reading for learning	9-14	Reading knowledge as motivation.
4	Multiplicity and complexity	14-17	Responding critically to what they read and analysing texts.
5	Construction and reconstruction	18+	Reading selectively and forming opinions.



https://dyslexiaida.org/scarboroughs-reading-rope-a-groundbreaking-infographic/

In addition to understanding *how* students learn to read (SVR) and the associated developmental stages (Chall's six stages), it is also vital that educators have a strong understanding of the intricacies related to each stage within reading development. Theorist Hollis Scarborough (2001) is credited with the development of **Scarborough's Reading Rope** which explores the intricacies within of each strand (skill) needed to develop strong, proficient readers. The Reading Rope (illustrated above) is made up of upper and lower strands. When combined, the strands lead to skilled reading. Not only does the rope metaphor illustrate the intricacies of reading development well, it highlights the interconnectedness of language comprehension and word recognition.

When an educator understands each strand, critical planning and instructional decisions can be made to address the learning and development of all students. Additionally, the nuanced research allows educators to identify gaps in reading development which may be hindering a student's pathway to proficient reading.

In addition to educators having a firm grasp of the three research-based reading frameworks, it is equally important that educators establish a foundation of culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies, which seek to ensure **all learners** have access to an **equitable, culturally and linguistically responsive, high-quality literacy curriculum and learning environment.**

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE AND SUSTAINING PEDAGOGY

"Culture" includes the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts" (livescience.com). In order to create welcoming and safe spaces educator and student cultures must be honored, respected, learned and recognized. This involves opportunities to learn and share characteristics from our individual cultures in order to learn from and respect similarities and differences.

The research of Gloria Ladson-Billings in the early 1990s provided extensive research on **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP)** to support educators in reaching all students and debunking myths about teaching African American students. Her scholarship has provided educators the foundational knowledge needed to support CRP. Building on Ladson-Billings' work, Django Paris and H. Samy Alim developed **Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP)** where their research views "schools as places where the cultural ways of being in communities of color are sustained, rather than eradicated."

In the early 1990s many educators believed that African American students were not achieving at the same pace of White students due to differences in their abilities; Ladson-Billings worked to shift the deficit thinking "cannot" to "can" through teacher preparation programs to ensure new teachers had strategies to address the needs of students in urban environments. According to Ladson-Billings, three components of the CRP framework must be implemented in tandem to respond to societal inequities (Ladson-Billings, 2014, see diagram below). Paris and Samy H. Alim's introduction of CSP builds on the *asset-based pedagogies* view, by reinforcing that students' diversity adds value and strength to classrooms and communities (found here).

CRP Framework

COMPONENT	DEFINITION	HOW TO IMPLEMENT
Academic Success	The intellectual growth students experience as result of classroom instruction and learning experiences.	As a facilitator of learning, this is the opportunity to tap into developing metacognitive skills with learners during daily classroom instruction which involves various ways to reflect and respond to learning materials and activities in a safe and inviting way. Learners will be encouraged to ask questions and reflect on learning which will increase academic ownership and buy-in of content.
Cultural Competence	The ability to help students appreciate and celebrate their cultural origins while gaining knowledge of and fluency in at least one other culture.	As an educator, ensure that you understand (know about and honor) the importance of culture and its role in education and the community. This will require a critical examination of one's own identity and culture in order to strengthen instructional practice. As diverse experiences will be celebrated and utilized throughout learning, all learners will see themselves and others during their learning experiences.
Critical Consciousness	The ability to take learning beyond the confines of the classroom and use the school knowledge to identify, analyze, and solve real-world problems.	Educators have the opportunity to make classroom content relevant and connected to the real world so that students can develop and increase a socio-political mindset in which they are invited to recognize, evaluate and address issues in their individual environments.

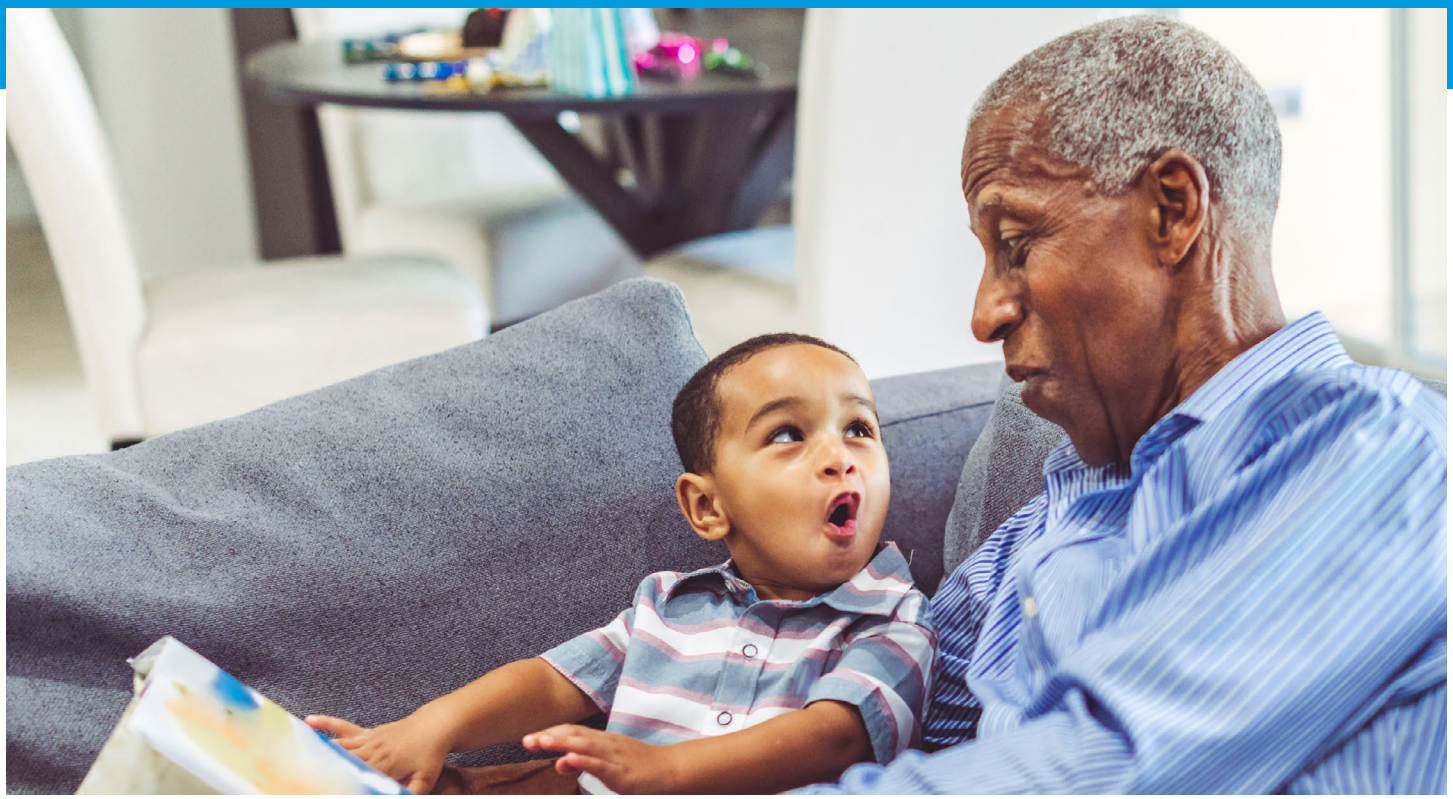
Zaretta Hammond (2015) also draws on the research of Ladson-Billings (1995) and adds neuroscience to the understanding of asset-based education. Hammond argues that **Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT)** is not a "bag of tricks" but instead a "pedagogical approach firmly rooted in learning theory and cognitive science" (Hammond, 2015). There is a transfer that must happen between pedagogy and practice to ensure the framework materializes into student growth, learning and development. Hammond's *Ready for Rigor,* A Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching allows educators to unpack the necessary tools needed to support the whole learner while also exploring, reflecting and confronting their individual ideals, values and biases that come into the learning space and in some instances hinder the brain development of learners. Hammond writes, "the four core areas of the framework of are connected through the principles of brain-based learning." Below is a chart adapted from Hammond's *Ready for Rigor* Framework. (Hammond, 2015, p. 17)

PRACTICE AREA	DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE
Awareness	Practitioners have the opportunity to explore the development of their sociopolitical lens, bringing consciousness to privilege and biases to ultimately challenge societal inequities.
Learning Partnerships	The focus here is on trust-building with students across difference to ensure deeper learning can happen in an environment that partners around social-emotional learning.
Information Processing	This practice focuses on building students' intellective capacity so that they can engage in deeper, more complex learning tasks. Here, practitioners get the tools needed to engage students in a meaningful way.
Community Building	In this area, practitioners focus on the learning environment to ensure that students feel socially and intellectually safe. Providing the safe space will allow students to be more self-directed with learning.

Adapted from the *Ready for Rigor* Framework in Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain (Hammond, 2015).

As we consider what will work best for learners across the District, we must employ the practices, strategies and tools from CRT, CSP and neuroscience to support diverse students. Simultaneously, we must engage in learning and reflection to ensure educational spaces are safe and inclusive and support the needs of all leaners with respect and acknowledgement of their individual cultural assets.

By coupling research-based reading instruction frameworks with culturally responsive and relevant strategies, District educators can support improved literacy outcomes for all students, regardless of content, grade level, or student demographics. In the next three subsections, the CLP will share relevant research and specific strategies for three age groups of literacy learners: birth through age five, grades K-5, and grades 6-12.



Babies are born able to process language and quickly become aware of the language(s) used around them in order to begin practicing using language on their own. Reading, talking and singing with infants and young children helps to build their understanding of the language they will come to use themselves. Reading to young children helps them understand how text works and positions them to increase their language and literacy skills throughout their lives.

The early literacy phase is the time from birth to age 5 before children are conventional readers (Raising Readers, 2020). Early language and literacy skills lay the foundation upon which every child's education rests. In turn, a critical role of laying this foundation is families', caregivers' and early educators' understanding of how children learn to read. When a young learner receives the necessary experiences to develop strong language and literacy skills, they become able to achieve personal autonomy and pursue their aspirations. If families, caregivers and early educators provide rich experiences that reflect an understanding of the pedagogy of early literacy and how young children learn, all children can develop age-appropriate early language and literacy skills.

The District of Columbia Early Learning Standards (DC ELS) include indicators for children birth through pre-K, as well as exit expectations for pre-K and kindergarten learners. DC ELS focus on the whole child and include a broad range of domains because young children's learning and development are interrelated and cross all areas of learning, including communication, language and literacy. These standards provide educators and families with information about expectations for what children need to know and do and describe how children progress at various ages and development levels. The DC ELS acknowledge the essential role of the teacher in intentionally guiding children's learning and development in a high-quality early care and education environment in partnership with families. The chart below shows how the early learning standards are organized.

STANDARDS	Serve as guidelines that describe children's development across the birth to five years age range
INDICATORS	Show children's progress in gaining concepts, knowledge and skills within each standard
EXAMPLES	Describe what the standard looks like at a certain age or development level
SUPPORTIVE PRACTICES	Suggest ways teachers can help children learn the skills involved

ELEMENTS OF EARLY LITERACY INSTRUCTION

The District recognizes the need to have a comprehensive approach that integrates the different elements of effective literacy instruction which intentionally align strategies and supports in achieving the established goals for all children in culturally and linguistically responsive ways in partnership with families. The District's approach to early literacy is grounded in the belief that, by using a multi-tiered framework, local LEAs, schools and early care and education programs can provide proactive, data-driven systems and structures that support prevention, early identification and literacy interventions to support all learners, including students with disabilities and English learners.

Early literacy skills have a clear and strong relationship with later conventional literacy skills (i.e., decoding, oral reading, fluency, reading comprehension, writing and spelling). Before children start school, they become aware of systematic patterns of sounds in spoken language, manipulate sounds in words, recognize words and break them apart into smaller units, learn the relationship between sounds and letters and build their oral language and vocabulary skills. The National Early Literacy Panel (2008) found that all these skills were precursors to children's later growth in the ability to decode and comprehend text, to write, and to spell. Experiences at home and in early care and education programs contribute to children's development of these early literacy skills.

Effective early literacy instruction has important elements that assist in improving children's early literacy learning experiences. Each element of effective early literacy instruction has a direct connection to the DC ELS with a specific standard(s) and supportive practices facilitated by each element. (Please see appendix A for more details.) These elements include:

Element 1: Positive Adult-Child Relationships

Young children's language and literacy learning benefit from interactions with adults who are responsive to their interests and sensitive to their current level of language development (Slegers, 1996; Dickinson & Neuman, 2007). During the infant and toddler years, children need many one-on-one interactions with caring adults to support their oral literacy development. For example, families can talk to very young children and respond to their attempts to engage with simple language and frequent eye-contact.

Young children also need families, caregivers and early educators to play with, talk with, sing to and listen to them. Finger play and other learning games can play an important role in developing children's language and literacy skills. In preschool, children need positive and nurturing relationships with teachers who can model reading and writing behaviors, engage in responsive conversations and foster their interests in learning to read and write (NAEYC, 1998; Teale & Yokota, 2000). Learning occurs within the context of relationships. Caring families, caregivers and early educators matter in a young child's life. Responsive and supportive interactions with adults are essential to children's learning. Positive adult-child relationships are the foundation for other adult practices that support children's language and literacy development, such as: being intentional in initiating and engaging in back-and-forth exchanges; responding to verbal and nonverbal cues; responding to statements, questions and texts read aloud to children; and skill building.

Element 2: A Print-Rich Environment

Children need materials to support their literacy development. Books, papers, writing tools and functional signs that are culturally and linguistically appropriate to young children should be visible throughout the learning environment or in children's homes (e.g., collecting menus, pointing out signs and indicating where there is print in the environment) so that children can see and use these materials for multiple purposes. In such settings, families, caregivers and early educators can draw children's attention to specific letters and words in the environment whenever it is appropriate.

When children have access to writing tools with which to express themselves in symbolic ways, they are motivated to learn. Children also engage in more reading and writing activities in print-rich environments (Slegers, 1996; The Access Center, 2007). Families, caregivers and early educators can provide age-appropriate materials such as crayons, markers, papers and manipulatives to support infants and toddlers.

In addition to accessible writing tools, children also need time to explore literacy. During free-choice periods, families, caregivers and early educators can encourage children to engage in literacy-related activities such as:

- Sharing and sending messages to friends;
- Creating menus for a restaurant;
- Writing grocery lists; and
- Making invitations to classroom events.

These activities help children understand what readers and writers do before they acquire the skills necessary to read and write. When literacy is an integral part of their daily activities, children actively construct their own literacy knowledge and strategies and learn to read and write naturally and playfully (Teale & Yokota, 2000).

Element 3: Integrated Language Explorations in the Curriculum

The curriculum should be intellectually engaging and challenging in a way that expands children's knowledge of the world and vocabulary. Investigating real topics or events that are meaningful to children should be a primary feature of the curriculum. When children investigate, they have opportunities to ask questions and use their literacy skills to explore their world and the world around them.

In formal early care and education settings, early educators can establish time each day for learners to present their thoughts in symbolic ways (e.g., drawings or illustrations). Intentionally explaining vocabulary and content (at home or in formal care settings) can support children's acquisition of rich subject-specific vocabulary (e.g., telescope as part of a unit about space and planets). Most young children are eager to learn literacy when they discover that it is useful for exploring the environment and for communicating with others (NAEYC, 1998; Neuman, 1998; Lin, 2001).

Families, caregivers and early educators may use the practices below in supporting children's language explorations within their home and learning environment:

- Display children's drawings and writing with dictated captions that explain their meaning;
- Encourage frequent lap-reading, showing and talking about illustrations and by reading simple texts aloud.
- Provide a variety of sturdy cardboard and cloth books for infants to explore.
- Share books with infants, following their interest in the pictures and textures of books.
- Throughout the day, model the use of new words introduced earlier in the day.
- When getting ready to read a new book to children, tell them the names of the author and illustrator.
- Go on a "book hunt" in the classroom, asking children to find a book by the way you describe its cover.

Element 4: Reading and Writing Activities

Listening to stories and discussing them are very important activities at home and in early care and education classrooms. For very young children, who normally have very short attention spans, story times work best when they are short (about 5-10 minutes) and conversational. Families, caregivers and early educators can share cardboard books, nursery rhymes, books with photographs or drawings of animals, people and brightly colored objects. They can also discuss what they see in illustrations starting with the cover and moving to the end. Through these activities, children learn to focus their attention on words and pictures (Neuman & Bredekamp, 2000). In preschool, children need daily exposure to books that are age appropriate and depict a wide range of children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Families, caregivers and early educators can intentionally and repeatedly read books to individual children or to small groups of children multiple times a day; these readings should be from books that positively reflect children's identity, differing abilities, home language and culture.

Speaking with inflection when reading to young children helps to convey meanings. Families, other caregivers and early educators may either stop and ask questions or encourage children to enjoy the language and the rhythm of the book. After readings, children should have opportunities to talk about what was read and focus on the sounds and parts of language as well as the meaning of the book. Group discussions followed by the retelling of a story using pictures or actual objects are effective devices for engaging children and enhancing their understanding of the stories.

Children not only need to listen to books, they also need to have chances to read independently. Having a library corner with comfortable furniture that encourages children to read by themselves is a central part of the learning environment. Varying levels and varieties of reading materials, such as age-appropriate fiction, nonfiction and poetry reading materials should be provided to broaden children's reading experiences. Below are additional considerations:

- Good lighting and lively displays or arrangements of readily accessible books encourage children to stay in the library;
- Encourage children to do book talks to encourage others to read it; and
- Allow opportunities for children to read to audiences, including peers, families or even stuffed animals.

Writing is a critical activity in early care and education classrooms because it supports the integration of important language and emergent literacy skills that lay the foundation for children's reading skills. The National Early Literacy Panel (NELP) report (2008, p. vii), identifies ''medium to large predictive relationships" between young children's writing skills and later measures of literacy development.

Element 6: Phonics and Phonemic Awareness

According to the National Institute for Literacy (2001), phonemic awareness is the ability to think about and work with individual sounds in spoken languages. Before children learn to read, they need to be aware of how sounds work. Early educators should integrate phonemic awareness instruction daily in the curriculum to help children learn to read and spell. Instruction can start with having children categorize the first phonemes — the smallest functional unit of speech — in words and then progress to more complicated combinations.

According to the National Reading Panel (2000), "Phonics skills must be integrated with the development of phonemic awareness, fluency and text reading comprehension skills." Developing skills in blending and manipulating phonemes has been found to permit many children to develop strong reading abilities. Table 1 below shows ages at which children typically develop various phonological skill (DC ELS, 2019).

Table 1: Typical Development of Phonological Skills

AGE	SKILL DOMAIN	SAMPLE TASKS
0-12 months	Babbles and experiments with tone and pitch	Vocalize, "Ba, ba, ba. BA, BA, BA."
12-18 months	Repeats words; joins in singing random words of simple songs	Say, "Horse," when their teacher points to a picture and prompts, "I see a horse."
19-36 months	Joins in songs, rhymes, refrains and word games with repeating language sounds	Say, "Baby bee," as the teacher sings, "I'm bringing home a baby bumble bee…"
3 years old	Plays with language, experimenting with beginning and ending sounds	While playing a memory game, laugh when they turn over a card with a pig and say, "Wig! No, pig!"
4 years old	Rote imitation and enjoyment of rhyme and alliteration	**pool, drool, tool** "Seven silly snakes sang songs seriously."
5 years old	Rhyme recognition, odd word out	"Which two words rhyme: **stair, steel, chair**?"
	Recognition of phonemic changes in words	"*Hickory Dickory Clock*. That's not right!"
	Clapping, counting syllables	**truck** (1 syllable) **airplane** (2 syllables) **boat** (1 syllable) **automobile** (4 syllables)

Element 7: Using Differentiated Teaching Strategies to Meet Children's Needs

In literacy-rich classrooms, some children are able to learn the skills and strategies necessary for reading and writing through engagement in meaningful activities. Finger plays, songs, poems, games, chants and book listening, and discussion all help children to pick up new vocabularies, understand the similarities and differences in language and develop phonemic awareness (NAEYC, 1998; Neuman, 1998; Bulloch 2009). However, it is important for families, caregivers and early educators to adjust teaching strategies that are culturally and linguistically responsive and according to children's interests and needs.

Some children need explicit, direct instruction where families, caregivers and early educators are intentionally providing activities and learning experiences for children to learn specific skills. In order to master a skill and make the learning experiences meaningful, families, caregivers and early educators must try to achieve a balance between activities and skill practices (NAEYC, 1998; Neuman, 1998; Schickedanz, 1998; Teale & Yokota, 2000). If a child fails to make expected progress in literacy learning or if their literacy skills are advanced, early educators may need to prepare more individualized instructional strategies to meet the child's needs.

Element 8: Family Engagement

Family engagement is the systematic inclusion of families in activities and programs that promote children's development, learning,and wellness (Children's Bureau, 2016). Child development facilities and schools must engage families as essential partners in supporting children's language and literacy development by providing intentional support to families. Family engagement can happen in the home, early care and education settings, at school and in the community. The family's engagement in the child's learning is an important predictor of a child's success. Children are healthier and ready for school when early learning programs build positive, ongoing and goal-oriented relationships with families.

Family engagement is most successful when programs and early educators build genuine relationships with families to support overall family well-being and children's healthy development. These partnerships are strongest when they are grounded in a common focus – a partnership between educators, families and others with the shared goal of helping children grow and thrive. The specific goals of the partnership for each family may vary and can depend on family preference, culture and economic or social factors, but a true partnership honors a family's strengths and culture and relies on mutual respect and shared goals for the child. Effective family partnerships include intentional strategies for supporting families from underrepresented communities. Partnerships should foster a genuine two-way exchange between programs or educators and families and proceed from an asset-based approach that respects and values cultural and linguistic diversity and are responsive to families' culture(s) and home language(s) (Auerbach, 2009; C. W. Cooper, 2009).

Early care and education programs and LEAs can develop goals and strategies for supporting families in their critical roles in children's literacy development. Programs' strategies for partnering with families must build parents' and other caregivers' confidence and competence in practices that directly support the language and literacy skills development of children. By communicating with families, offering resources and guidance for literacy development at home and developing strategic family partnerships, early care and education programs can create holistic and sustainable support systems for early learners. Language and literacy support for families offered by schools and communities should:

- Provide all families opportunities to be active supporters of their children's language and literacy development;
- Promote language and literacy interactions at home that are enjoyable for children and families;
- Provide clear, timely understanding for families about their children's progress;
- Equip families with the developmentally appropriate strategies and resources they need to support their children's learning, such as access to books;
- Promote literacy in families' home languages;
- Incorporate the interests and cultures of children and their families; and
- Communicate high learning expectations for all children (Boone, et. al., 2017; Caspe & Lopez, 2017; Richards-Tutor, et. al., 2015).

Having a strong early literacy foundation is key for children to succeed in the transition from early care and education to the formal school setting, kindergarten and beyond.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

In July 2010, the District of Columbia adopted the Common Core State Standards, with the aim of ensuring students across the country graduate from high school prepared to succeed in College and Career. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were created in collaboration with teachers, school administrators and experts and define the knowledge and skills students should acquire in their pre-K through grade 12 academic careers. The grade-level standards:

- Are aligned with college and work expectations;
- Are clear, understandable and consistent;
- Include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills;
- Build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards;
- Are informed by other top performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society; and
- Are evidence-based.

The Common Core Anchor Standard 10 requires kindergarten through 12th grade students to read and comprehend a broad variety of text types at increasingly challenging levels (CCSS, 2021). In order for students to proficiently and independently engage with complex texts at their grade level, they must have exposure to a comprehensive reading, research and writing English language arts (ELA) curriculum that promotes building content knowledge through science and social studies content (Duke, 2020). Knowledge and comprehension are connected and work in tandem with students' ability to comprehend complex text to demonstrate proficiency with anchor standard 10. In addition to leveraging disciplinary literacy content knowledge within a comprehensive literacy curriculum, teachers should attend to students' comprehension skills with active text engagement strategies, such as text discussion to clarify and summarize key ideas from the text. Additionally, a solid tier I curriculum should provide students with opportunities to make predictions and generate questions using their background knowledge and information presented in the text (Castles, Rastle &Nation, 2018). In addition to providing students with an opportunity to decode, acquire language and reading comprehension, a high-quality curriculum will also incorporate assessment opportunities to measure student progress, which includes screening, diagnostic and progress monitoring in the areas of phonics, print concepts, vocabulary, morphology/word analysis, comprehension and fluency. "Intentional teachers gather data that are needed to guide instruction, ensuring that all children grow and learn" (Blessing, 2019). In these ways the standards connect to intentional uses of data to drive instructional change.

SHIFTS IN ELA INSTRUCTION

Not only do CCSS call for increased attention to rigor and text complexity, but also a shift in pedagogy, known as the *ELA Shifts*. The focus on knowledge-building, evidence and complexity support the mission of closing the opportunity gap and make learning transferable across grade bands and content areas. Achieve the Core describes the three shifts in ELA as a frame that describes how these standards raise expectations across multiple areas of students' educational experience, including instructional materials, classroom practice and assessment. The shifts illustrate how college- and career-ready standards contribute to transformative changes in the classroom that will better prepare students for opportunities after high school.

1. *Complexity* – Practice regularly with complex texts and its academic language.
2. *Evidence* – Ground reading, writing and speaking in evidence from text, both literary and informational.
3. *Knowledge* – Build knowledge through content-rich nonfiction.

Intentional and careful planning for literacy instruction with these three shifts as a guide allow learners to also develop their cognitive muscles that will support learning in the future.

HIGH QUALITY CURRICULUM

The second Guiding Principle for Literacy in the District states that all learners must have access to high-quality literacy instruction. High-quality materials should provide opportunities for students to listen, read, speak and write about their understanding of texts. Learners should have access to materials including classroom libraries and opportunities to form the same conclusion/answer as they listen and read grade-level texts using various modalities. Learners should be able to demonstrate understanding different genres and texts of varying levels of complexity which can be measured through activities and materials to include oral presentations, read-alouds, shared writing, writer's workshops, Socratic seminars, group think tanks and explicit phonics instruction.

Research strongly suggests that high-quality, Tier I materials have large effects on student learning and results may mimic those associated with teacher effectiveness. ELA curriculum should be coherent and connected across the various elements rather than fragmented and executed in isolation. Fragmented curriculum leads to lost opportunities for authentic tasks that tie together all elements of reading instruction. Additionally, Tier 1 materials should be vertically aligned across grade bands from K-12 as this coherence directly ties to student achievement outcomes.

High-quality curricular materials are an important lever for achieving equity. Underserved student groups including students of color, English learners and students with disabilities are less likely to have access and exposure to high-quality materials in class. In a multi-district 2018 study, TNTP found that students of color spend a substantial amount of class time using curricular materials that are below grade level or lacking in rigor, which widens the achievement gap (TNTP, 2018). A high-quality curriculum intentionally builds upon the cultural wealth and experiences of students to deepen learning (Gay, 2002). The absence of high-quality curriculum can and will contribute to exacerbated inequities.

LITERACY INSTRUCTION GRADES K-5

All students in K-5 must be engaged in reading, writing, speaking and listening instruction in authentic ways during or throughout the school day. The goal of a reader or listener is to use language to understand the message the writer or speaker is attempting to convey while the goal of the writer or speaker is to use language to communicate an intended message to the targeted audience. Gaining skill and proficiency in literacy in the elementary grades is critical for future academic and lifelong success. Research demonstrates that students who cannot read on grade level by grade 3 are at an increased risk to not graduate from high school by age 19, compared to children who do not read on grade level by grade 3. Additionally, 88 percent of students who do not earn a high school diploma struggled to read on grade level by grade 3 (Weyer & Casares, 2019). Thus, being on grade-level reading by grade 3 is identified as a critical milestone in literacy. If students are not proficient readers by grade 4, much of all subject matter across the content areas will be incomprehensible.

Within a traditional elementary school (grades K-5), children transition from learning to read (initial reading and decoding) to reading to learn. As children become aware of and master the relationship between sounds and letters and begin applying knowledge to text, they are able to read words accurately using knowledge of alphabetic principles. Proficiency, at this stage, depends on phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, decoding, automatic word recognition, knowing the meaning of most words, constructing meaning through connections and background knowledge, and monitoring comprehension.

Jeanne Chall's stage theory (1996) (described earlier) suggests that children develop reading proficiency skills on a continuum. The skills within each stage are dependent on one another to ensure learners master the developmental continuum. Additionally, skills introduced may continue to be fostered in subsequent stages. Liben and Liben (2003) suggest that the goal of elementary literacy instruction is to allow students to develop foundational capacities and the confidence as young readers. They describe the *both/and* approach to reading instruction with an equal focus and emphasis on foundational reading skill development and comprehension of complex texts.

Thus, it is essential for educators to understand the developmental continuum to support learners in achieving literacy success. However, the process of acquiring literacy proficiencies is an ongoing process that continues to develop throughout life. Therefore, educators must be skilled in understanding not only the respective skills for their students, but also the vertical progression of literacy development to be able to appropriately meet the needs of all learners.

Students in grades K-5 must acquire a solid foundation of early literacy skills in order to build reading fluency and stamina. In the elementary grades, foundational skills must be intentionally taught and practiced. The components of early literacy are designed to build knowledge and foundational skills in the areas of: print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition which provide the brain what it needs to learn how to read. Through the use of decodable texts, students can focus on practicing their reading abilities. Once mastered, these skills form the foundation from which students can comprehend the words and sentences they read and begin to make meaning for themselves.

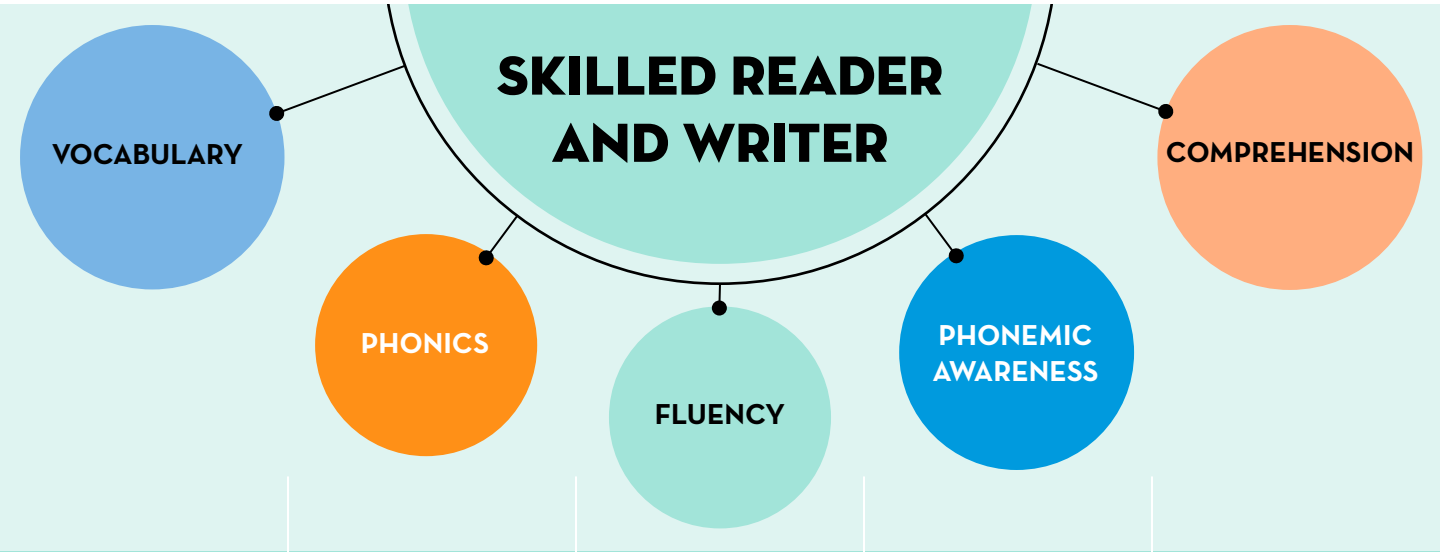
However, mastery of foundational standards is not the singular goal of instruction; understanding texts and being able to express meaning is the true goal of comprehension in the elementary grades. The remaining standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language are meant to be addressed holistically, with the text at the center.

AREAS OF READING AND WRITING COMPETENCY

Teaching students to read accurately and fluently and with comprehension is a goal that should ideally be achieved by the end of grade 3. However, explicit instruction in the skills that will help students achieve a thorough level of reading comprehension should be continued through grade 5. According to the National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2000), years of scientific research indicates that basic reading and writing require competence in the following five areas:

- Phonemic awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension

The approach to teaching these five essential components of reading and writing effectively should be systematic and effective. "**Systematic instruction** reflects ... skills and concepts [that] are taught in a planned, logically progressive sequence. **Explicit instruction** means the teacher states clearly what is being taught and models effectively how it is used by a skilled reader" (Associates, 2004). When instruction is systematic and explicit, students will master the skills necessary to become a skilled reader as depicted in Scarborough's Reading Rope (2001). For more information, see the beginning of Section 2: Literacy Instruction.



VOCABULARY

The vocabulary that we use on a daily basis is how we communicate with others. The four types of vocabulary include: listening (words we hear), speaking (words we say), reading (words we see), and writing (words we write). Listening and speaking vocabularies are collectively referred to as oral vocabulary, which influences how easily a reader is able to recognize words they see in print.

PHONICS

The set of rules that defines the relationship between words, how they are spelled and the sounds of spoken language is known as phonics. "For the English language, these relationships are predictable, but not completely consistent. However, they are consistent enough to be very useful to young children in helping them learn to decode unfamiliar words" (Foorman et al., 1998).

FLUENCY

When one is able to read smoothly, just as if they are speaking, then that is reading with fluency. Fluency involves reading words rapidly and accurately with the correct emphasis and proper intonation.

PHONEMIC AWARENESS

Phonemic awareness involves the ability to hear different sounds (or phonemes) that make up a word and the skill to orally blend them together, or orally separate them. It can also include segmenting words into their component sounds and recognizing words that sound alike or different. Phonemic awareness is the first step to reading success.

COMPREHENSION

Comprehension is achieved when a student is able to accurately read a text and use background knowledge to construct meaning. When these two things happen in tandem, a student can clearly understand what is explicitly and implicitly going on in a text. Comprehension is the culminating goal of reading instruction.

Ideally, students should master the overall progression of reading and writing skills for each grade level on a specific timeframe. **See Appendix B** for a table showing the progression of these reading and writing competencies from kindergarten through grade 5 (adapted from the CCSS and the English Language Arts/ English Development Framework for California Public Schools K-12). The process represents a continuum of complexity that is grounded in basic decoding skills and moves toward increasingly complex levels of comprehension. Each step in the process is essential and meaningful, and "students cannot and should not bypass any critical skills necessary for fluent and meaningful reading just because of their chronological age" (Moats, 2001). It is important to note that teaching reading is a revolving process of modeling for students and coaching, which guides students toward independent application.

IMPORTANCE OF SOLID TIER I CURRICULUM

Curriculum and standards play an important role in *what* and *how* students develop their literacy skills for college and career readiness (Pimental, 2017 & CCSS, 2021). "Multiple component areas play key roles in literacy acquisition, and teachers' attention to these areas within a language arts block is important" (Spear-Swerling & Zibulsky, 2014, p. 1354). The CCSS address foundational skills in kindergarten through second grade; however, research suggests students continue to work at solidifying their foundational skills up until the end of third grade in service of fluent decoding of basic to more complex words (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2010). A Tier I curriculum also known as a the core curriculum should be aligned with state standards with the intent to provide high-quality instruction to all students. Within an elementary literacy program of study, foundational skills are the early reading skills, such as the ability to segment and manipulate sounds through phonemic and phonological awareness and linking sounds to letters through automatic awareness of the alphabetic principle. These skills are needed for students to make the leap from letter-sound awareness to fluent decoding and encoding at their appropriate grade level (Institute of Education Sciences (IES), 2016). To support students in developing these early literacy skills, teachers and students must have access to research-based systematic and structured phonics curriculum that provide students with multiple opportunities to practice and apply their early literacy skills with activities that promote word segmentation, rhyming, word building and blending (IES, 2016).

In grades 4-5, teachers should leverage a Tier I curriculum with an emphasis on morphology (the study of forms of words) to support students with building onto their early literacy skills by focusing on meaningful instruction on word parts and how they are combined. Students who experience explicit morphology instruction have stronger awareness of word structure, which is essential for students in decoding multisyllabic words, and understanding the meaning of words in complex texts (Moates, 2010). Students in the upper elementary grades should engage in word study activities focused on root words, prefixes, suffixes, affixes and inflectional endings in service of supporting students with fluent decoding and overall text comprehension.

K-5 LITERACY INSTRUCTIONAL TAKEAWAYS:

The CCSS encompass the foundational skills learners need to develop academically to prepare them for increasingly complex texts and tasks.

- Foundational skills are a critical component of brain development (see Intro Literacy Instruction).
- Elementary literacy instruction should also focus on building student knowledge and academic language

Photo by Allison Shelley/The Verbatim Agency for EDUimages

INTRODUCTION TO SECONDARY LITERACY

As students transition from elementary to secondary schools, the focus on literacy begins to build on the skills and knowledge students received for the first half of a student's educational journey. As secondary educators accept the baton, their focus is typically on building, expanding and enhancing foundational literacy skills so learners can access more rigorous texts and tasks and ultimately prepare learners to enter into a global society. Learners entering grade 6 are reading to learn as they develop and progress through the continuum of reading. Another consideration for educators is the new demands of reading and writing across content areas. In most instances, *Disciplinary Literacy* is known as literacy skills specialized to history, science, mathematics, literature or other subject matters (Shanahan and Shanahan, 2008). It is not introduced as a concept; instead, students are expected to be literate across subject areas with little to no literacy support for those areas. The Common CorCSS draws attention not only to nonfiction reading, complex writing, academic discourse and language skills, it shows the rigorous demands of literacy. "As students' advance through grades, their literacy instruction should become increasingly more complex and discipline-based and should support students' understanding of complex texts in each content area" (Zygouris-Coe, 2012). This change in awareness to literacy provides the chance to position literacy as an essential component in all content areas and thus provide learners and educators the tools and resources need to be successful.

Additionally, the CCSS have an intentional focus on rigor, complexity, range of texts and tasks. The need for literacy-rich environments in secondary school has become more apparent as the rigor in the progression of reading increases drastically in grades 6-12. The chart below illustrates what learners should be able to read and comprehend at end of each year.

Reading Progression Chart

GRADE	WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW AND BE ABLE TO DO BY THE END OF YEAR
6	By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature [informational texts, history/social studies texts, science/technical texts] in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
7	By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature [informational texts, history/social studies texts, science/technical texts] in the grades 6-8 texts complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
8	By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature [informational texts, history/social studies texts, science/technical texts] at the high end of the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
9-10	By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature [informational texts, history/social studies texts, science/technical texts] in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature [informational texts, history/social studies texts, science/technical texts] at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
11-12	By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature [informational texts, history/social studies texts, science/technical texts] in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature [informational texts, history/social studies texts, science/technical texts] at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

From The Common Core State Standards, **Appendix A**, pg. 10

SECONDARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERACY STANDARDS

As stated previously, the CCSS has changed the way literacy educators think about K-12 instruction. New research on text complexity required educators to make numerous planning considerations to ensure learning opportunities are balanced across the text complexity triad (qualitative measures, quantitative measures, and reader-task considerations). The figure to the left is an annotated example of the text complexity considerations for a secondary text, *The Longitude Prize.* This demonstrates some of the planning considerations associated with text complexity needed to ensure accessibility to complex grade level texts and tasks.

Educators can use various resources including planning templates and rubrics, to support measuring text complexity. Using these tools will not only increase familiarity with the nuances of text complexity, but also support educators in making critical planning considerations for learning.

The CCSS shifts in ELA were designed to guide secondary educators to prepare students for college and career. Educators will use the shifts for pedagogical and instructional implementation of the CCSS in reading, writing, speaking and listening in secondary instruction.

1. *Complexity* – Practice regularly with complex texts and its academic language.
2. *Evidence* – reading, writing and speaking in evidence from text, both literary and informational.
3. *Knowledge* – Build knowledge through content-rich nonfiction.

QUALITATIVE MEASURES	QUANTITATIVE MEASURES
Structure The text is moderately complex and subtle in structure. Although the text may appear at first glance to be a conventional narrative, Dash mainly uses narrative elements in the service of illustrating historical and technical points. The long quote adds to the structural challenge. **Language Conventionality and Clarity** Language is used literally and is relatively clear, but numerous archaic, domain-specific, and otherwise unfamiliar terms are introduced in the course of citing primary historical sources and discussing the craft, art, and science of navigation. The quote further adds an archaic language burden. **Knowledge Demands** The text assumes relatively little prior knowledge regarding seafaring and navigation, but some general sense of the concepts of latitude and longitude, the nature of sailing ships, and the historical circumstances that promoted exploration and trade is useful to comprehending the text. **Purpose** The single, relatively clear purpose of the text (not fully apparent in the excerpt but signaled by the title) is to recount the discovery of the concept of longitude. But this is not readily apparent from the excerpt.	Various readability measures of *The Longitude Prize* are largely in agreement that the text is appropriate for the grades 9–10 text complexity band. The Coh-Metrix analysis notes that the text is primarily informational in structure despite the narrative opening. (Recall from "Why Text Complexity Matters," above, that research indicates that informational texts are generally harder to read than narratives.) While the text relies on concrete language and goes to some effort to connect central ideas for the reader, it also contains complex syntax and few explicit connections between words and sentences. **READER-TASK CONSIDERATIONS** These are to be determined locally with reference to such variables as a student's motivation, knowledge, and experiences as well as purpose and the complexity of the task assigned and the questions posed. **RECOMMENDED PLACEMENT** Various quantitative measurements place The Longitude Prize into the grades 9–10 text complexity band; the qualitative analysis would indicate there are enough complex features to warrant its placement in the tenth grade. • ATOS: 10.5 • DRP®: 66 • Lexile®: 1300L • Reading Maturity: 8.67 SourceRater: 10.7

From, Supplemental Information for **Appendix A** of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy: New Research on Text Complexity. Pg. 10

STANDARDS-BASED INSTRUCTION

In conjunction with the three shifts the CCSS, emphasis is placed on Standards-Based Instruction (SBI) which is most effective when educators have a solid grounding in the knowledge and skills that students need to master, coupled with the content within each standard in alignment with grade level targets. In order for this to happen schools must have strong "systems of instruction, assessment, grading, and academic reporting that are based on students demonstrating understanding or mastery of the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn as they progress through their education." (From: www.edglossary.org/standards-based/)

Much like elementary, secondary students should be engaging with a high-quality, standards-based curriculum for Tier 1 instruction as well. Components of a high-quality curriculum not only support students in their development as measured by the reading continuum (Chall, 1983) it reinforces the three shifts of the Common Core in ELA instruction. Educators must focus on "the general goal of standards-based learning [which] is to ensure that students are acquiring the knowledge and skills that are deemed to be essential to success in school, higher education, careers, and adult life." (www.edglossary.org/standards-based/)

GRADE-LEVEL TEXTS

All learners should receive daily literacy instruction using complex, grade-level texts. This premise departs from years of research that advocated students use leveled readers and texts to fill gaps and reduce or prevent struggle. Current scholarly consensus points out that reading on "level" does not lead to overall student improvement in reading; instead, this further widens the gap. Not only does reading complex, grade-level text promote productive struggle, it creates an equitable learning environment for all learners. You deny students the right to improve their reading comprehension argues Jiban, "if you don't grant them access every day to some meaty grade-level text" (Jiban, 2020). Providing learning opportunities with rigorous texts and tasks allow students to tap into the cognitive part of their brain which will support brain development and increases the chances for academic achievement. The District of Columbia seeks to provide all learners with a rigorous and equitable learning experience in literacy.

Writing in Secondary Literacy Spaces

Before exploring the specific demands of the CCSS in writing, below are a few overarching considerations educators should keep in mind when teaching and assessing strong student writing.

TYPE OF WRITING	INSTRUCTIONAL IMPLICATIONS	PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS
Expository writing:	As students read a complex text, they take notes and make annotations to process their thoughts through writing. They might observe repetition of words or phrases; investigate the relationship of various figures of speech in a text or texts; or make a connection between central ideas of one text to another.	• What are the reader's expectations? • What information do they expect that the piece of writing will provide? • What are the reader's goals in reading, and in what context are they reading? • How can the writer most effectively communicate the essential information?
Argumentative writing	In this form of writing, students take an arguable position about a text or topic and provide clear reasoning in support of their position.	
Narrative writing	It is focused on story, meaning it has a narrative plot with an inciting moment, rising action, climax and dénouement. The narrative writing standard can refer to fiction or creative nonfiction.	
Writing for research	Through research writing, students find, read, and synthesize various data to offer a perspective about a topic.	

By applying this general framework, writing focuses on the expectations, goals, situations and needs of the readers. Taking these overarching questions of writing and audience as a starting point, these are the most common and most assessed forms of student writing based on the CCSS.

DISCIPLINARY LITERACY

As students transition into secondary education, they will more frequently encounter specific conventions and expectations of particular disciplines. The literacy classroom provides learners opportunities to practice and reflect on the differences and similarities of the different types of writing. In other subjects (mathematics, science, social studies and technical subjects), students can then further reflect on more discrete differences of expectations for writing within particular disciplines. The general framework of considering the audience holds: what does the reader expect to learn from this piece of writing, and how can the writer most effectively communicate the essential information?

In addition to reading to understand and writing to convey understanding of grade level complex texts, the CCSS draw attention to the modes of language through the speaking standards. In addition to attention to speaking, there is a direct connect to listening, thus we have the speaking and listening standards. The CCSS outlines two sections to support students with mastering skills in oral communication and collaboration.

- **CCSS.SL.6: Comprehension and Collaboration** at the anchor level means that learners can engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions on grade=-level topics, texts and issues through individual expression and building on the thoughts of others.
- **CCSS.SL.4: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas** at the anchor level asks learners to present claims and finding logically while maintaining some elements of formal presentation.

Not only do the speaking and listening standards present the question of: How often do students have the opportunity to express themselves by engaging in discussion? Those standards encourage educators to know their students' abilities related to comprehension, writing and speaking and listening in order to engage students in a variety of discussions.
(From: www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/6/)

As educators plan opportunities for speaking and listening, many variables must be considered to optimize the time allotted for effective and engaging opportunities to collaboratively present comprehension of, and ideas related to text. Gonzalez (2015) shares 15 formats for structuring class discussions within the strategies, placing emphasis on engagement, equity and rigor and sharing with readers the amount of prep needed for successful implementation.

HIGH-PREP STRATEGY	LOW-PREP STRATEGY	ONGOING STRATEGY
Philosophical Chairs at the "basic" level involves a statement with two possible stances to be read aloud. Students move to one side of the learning space that coincides with their response and take turns defending the position selected.	*Hot Seat* on student takes on the role of a character from the text. While sitting in front of the class that student responds from the point of view from the selected character.	Teach-OK is an opportunity for students to reteach a concept or idea from class to a peer. This "re-teach" happens on demand and can occur at any time. This is an opportunity to check for understanding (or formative discussion) on a specific skill or concept.

Adapted from: The Big List of Class Discussion Strategies by Jennifer Gonzalez

Within the context of literacy instruction, "language" refers to conventions of writing, an understanding of language (grammar and syntax, for example) and vocabulary. According to Appendix A of the CCSS, "the Standards take a hybrid approach to matters of conventions, knowledge of language, and vocabulary." This means students should acquire "language" skills and knowledge through reading, writing, speaking and listening *and* through direct instruction.

Take for example, the figure below.

STRAND	STANDARD
Reading	**R.CCR.4.** Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
Writing	**W.CCR.5** Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
Speaking and Listening	**SL.CCR.6.** Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demosntrating command of formal Englishwhen indicated or appropriate.

The language standards are the final piece of the puzzle bringing literacy instruction together. The final set of standards show the incorporation of each strand of the Scarborough's Rope, which with intentional planning and instruction ensure that we are creating and supporting proficient readers. For more information on learning how to read, see the Literacy Instruction Introduction.

The ELA evidence tables provide educators with examples of the skills and subskills of each standard allow educators to plan for instruction of concrete skills while spiraling in other skills and standards and can be used to support planning, instruction, data analysis and professional learning.

To prepare students to meet the expectations of college and career, educational systems must be strengthened to:

- Providing teachers time for planning instruction collaboratively, to ensure students are receiving accessible and inclusive daily classroom instruction, this includes targeted and specific supports as needed for: general education, special education, English learners and students with disabilities;
- Implementation of evidence-based practices and culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogy to guide literacy strategies; and
- Ensuring content-rich, diverse, high-quality instructional materials are aligned to the science of reading and encompass all content areas.

For more information about serving diverse learners affectively within the general education classroom, visit these sections of the CLP.

- English Learners
- Special Education
- Students with Disabilities
- Evidence-Based Practices

Combining opportunities for practicing new strategies and techniques will positively impact student achievement, and encourage opportunities for sincere collaboration that will empowers educators to transform the current state of literacy instruction and achievement in the District.

SECTION 3: MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORTS FOR LITERACY

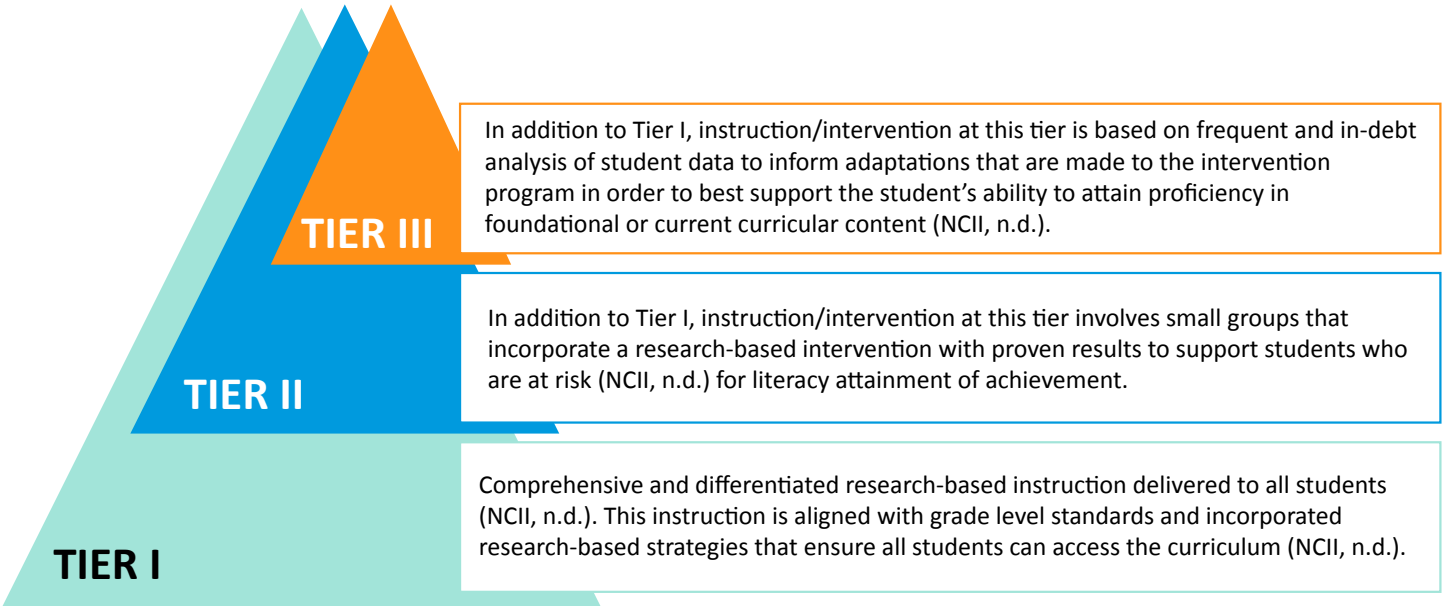
WHAT IS A MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT?

A multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) is a preventative, data-driven, continuum of evidence-based practices that is designed to meet the academic, behavioral and social emotional needs of all students. MTSS is best practice for ensuring that all students have equitable opportunities to access the curriculum and perform proficiently on grade-level standards while fostering productive partnerships between schools, families and the broader community. Response to Intervention (RtI) is the MTSS for academics. This tiered continuum of instruction and intervention requires high-quality instruction, evidence-based practices, and research-based curricula and materials. This continuum also includes enrichment opportunities across all grade levels.

Within a MTSS framework, literacy instruction at all tiers requires a research-based curriculum and differentiated instruction across all domains of literacy.

- *Tier I*, comprehensive research-based instruction is delivered to all students aligned with grade-level standards. Regardless of additional supports needed, all students require Tier I instruction.
- *Tier II* instruction can be implemented in addition to the Tier I core instruction to any student not meeting benchmarks. Tier II includes strategic support through a research-based intervention that supplements core instruction and may cover all domains of literacy.
- *Tier III* is the most intensive level of intervention and is tailored to individualized student needs. Interventions at Tier III should be focused on the specific domain of literacy in which the student is not meeting with success.

The difference between tiers is based on data driven factors including, student performance results. The data should inform the selection or adoption of a tool, strategy or program to address student outcomes. The decision of what to use at each tier is not a "one size fits all" approach, the MTSS framework encourages the use of a data driven instruction cycle. The MTSS framework aligns to Literacy Guiding Principle 3.



TIERED INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTION

Decision-making regarding instruction and intervention tiers is made based on data obtained about students' strengths and needs. These data are collected through universal screening, formative assessments, curriculum-based assessments and regular progress monitoring of literacy. Teams are encouraged to collect multiple data points regarding a student's ability over time. School-based personnel and families work together to identify and define student literacy needs, generate solutions through strategic data based academic planning and evaluate individual students' RtI.

While a robust MTSS process that provides universal support and tiered intervention and support as a best practice, it cannot supplant evaluation requirements and timelines in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The US Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) issued a memorandum in 2011 clarifying that interventions cannot be used to delay or deny an evaluation under IDEA.

LITERACY ASSESSMENTS AND INSTRUCTION WITHIN MTSS

GOAL 1: *To plan and deliver instruction that is based on evidence, on students' needs, and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)*

GOAL 2: *Improve literacy achievement through analysis of a variety of assessment data*

A MTSS framework requires high-quality instruction and a valid and reliable system of assessments and progress monitoring. Both instruction and assessment work in tandem to guide instructional practices. A high-quality literacy core curriculum is the essential starting point for an effective MTSS in alignment with Literacy Guiding principle 2 is **ASSESSMENT**: High-quality literacy instruction must be accompanied by a comprehensive, standards-aligned formative and summative assessment system that is accessible to all learners, including students with disabilities and English learners. With Tier 1 being focused on building a strong literacy foundation, students need instruction and programming supported by evidence and aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). All core curriculum materials should be research-based for the target population of learners including subgroups. With this in place, a system of assessments enables continuous improvement and targeted support. The data driven instruction cycle that MTSS requires assessment, analysis and action. Assessments should include all domains of literacy and should be aligned with the core curriculum. Analysis of these assessment data will indicate needs for action including instructional changes, focus on the achievement of certain subgroups, and can serve as indicators of individual students needing additional support through intervention. For more information about Assessment, see the Assessment and Progress Monitoring section of the CLP.

Assessments which support MTSS

While universal screeners are not the sole source for identifying student needs, MTSS cannot function as intended without them (Gersten, Dimino, & Haymond, 2011). No single assessment should be the access point for students to enter intervention; however, universal screeners allow us to quickly check the progress of all students and compare students' progress. Students in Prekindergarten through third grade should be administered a universal screening one to three times yearly depending on the LEA policy. These assessments must demonstrate reliability and validity for predicting general outcomes for literacy. Data from universal screeners is analyzed to predict students at risk for poor learning outcomes in literacy. Trends across universal screeners and additional data points also serve as indicators for needed adjustments to instructional practices and gaps in the curriculum. All students are also progress-monitored regularly. One of the goals in a tiered intervention system is for students to get the support they require as soon as possible in order to access the core curriculum at Tier I. Because there are several months between universal screening, curriculum-based assessments and systematic progress monitoring is also required for early identification. Teachers must consistently monitor students' progress at scheduled intervals and be able to respond appropriately when students are not achieving grade-level proficiency. Students receiving support through interventions are progress-monitored more frequently, which in most instances is weekly.

A High-Quality MTSS Assessment System Includes The Following:

Screening Tools	Evidence indicates that the screening tools are reliable, correlations between the instruments and valued outcomes are strong, and predictions of risk status are accurate, and staff is able to articulate the supporting evidence.
Universal Screening	All of the following conditions are met: (1) screening is conducted for all students (i.e., is universal); (2) procedures are in place to ensure implementation accuracy (i.e., all students are tested, scores are accurate, cut points/decisions are accurate); and (3) a process to screen all students occurs more than once per year (e.g., fall, winter, spring).
Data Points to Assess Risk	Screening data are used in concert with at least two other data sources (e.g., classroom performance, performance on state assessments, diagnostic assessment data, short-term progress monitoring, common assessments) to verify decisions about whether a student is or is not at risk.
Progress Monitoring Tools	Selected progress-monitoring tools meet all the following criteria: (1) have sufficient number of alternate forms of equal and controlled difficulty to allow for progress monitoring at recommended intervals based on intervention level; (2) specify minimum acceptable growth; (3) provide benchmarks for minimum acceptable end-of-year performance; and (4) reliability and validity information for the performance-level score is available and staff is able to articulate the supporting evidence.
Progress Monitoring Process	Both of the following conditions are met: (1) progress monitoring occurs at least monthly for students receiving secondary-level intervention and at least weekly for students receiving intensive intervention; and (2) procedures are in place to ensure implementation accuracy (i.e., appropriate students are tested, scores are accurate, decision-making rules are applied consistently).
Decision-making process	The mechanism for making decisions about the participation of students in the instruction/intervention levels meets all of the following criteria: The process (1) is data-driven and based on validated methods; (2) involves a broad base of stakeholders; and (3) is operationalized with clear, established decision rules (e.g., movement between levels or tiers, determination of appropriate instruction or interventions).
Data System	A data system is in place that meets all the following conditions: (1) the system allows users to document and access individual student-level data (including screening and progress-monitoring data) and instructional decisions; (2) data are entered in a timely manner; (3) data can be represented graphically; and (4) there is a process for setting/evaluating goals.

(Center on Response to Intervention, 2014)

INTERVENTION

GOAL 1: *Improve quality and delivery of instruction across tiers*

Intervention is instruction that supplements and intensifies classroom instruction. Practice opportunities or additional assignments are not considered interventions. Interventions must be evidence- or researched-based and should be normed for the target population. While Tier I and II interventions may address a variety of literacy domains, Tier III interventions are more intensive and are adapted to address the individual needs of students. Increased intensity of interventions can be "increased duration or frequency, change in interventionist, decreased group size, change in instructional delivery, and change in type of intervention all based on student data" (AIR, 2014). All tiers of intervention require that students have full access to the curriculum. Interventions should address the general education curriculum in an appropriate manner for students.

To identify students for interventions, screening data are used with other data sources including but not limited to performance on other assessments, and classroom work samples. Data also help in identifying the interventions that are appropriate for individual students. The intervention must target the specific areas of literacy the student has demonstrated a need in and not be generally assigned.

Resources supported by the US Department of Education for identifying appropriate literacy interventions:

- National Center for Intensive Intervention
- What Works Clearinghouse

INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

GOAL 1: *Establish organizational structures necessary to operationalize a unified MTSS system*

GOAL 2: *Maximize the use of personnel, parents and external stakeholders to support literacy instruction*

In order for the MTSS framework to be implemented with fidelity while meeting the needs of all students, schools must consider the following necessary components:

- School leadership proactively supports the MTSS framework and makes decisions that support it (e.g.. allocating resources for staffing, professional development, scheduling)
- School-based professional development is structured for reflection and continuous improvement utilizing information from ongoing student and schoolwide data
- School schedules are supportive of multiple levels of intervention with opportunities for students needing intervention to receive them without missing core instruction
- Instruction, assessment and intervention are culturally and linguistically relevant
- Parents/guardians are engaged in the intervention process from the onset and there are systems in place for communicating with parents/guardians at reliable and regular intervals on their student's progress with Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions and ways they can support outside of school as possible
- The MTSS team is representative of all key stakeholders and there is a clearly defined process to guide decision making. This team includes but is not limited to the general education teacher, special education teacher, instructional coach, interventionist, counselor, parents, related service providers, student support coordinator, paraprofessionals, school based mentor, school volunteers, community mentor, community service providers, LEA specialists and student
- Interventions are research based and the intensity and duration of interventions are continually assessed and monitored
- Staffing for interventions are with well trained instructors who work closely with classroom teachers

MTSS begins with a robust, rigorous curriculum and well-trained teachers utilizing effective assessment, instruction and differentiation practices with fidelity. It is important that all stakeholders understand that the focus of the MTSS framework is not to limit access to the core curriculum, but to enable all students to succeed academically through access to the general education curriculum while addressing any gaps in foundational knowledge and skills, rather than at the exclusion of access to the core curriculum. In order for this to occur, schools must consider not only the effectiveness of their Tier I instruction, but also the systems, staffing, scheduling and professional development needs for effective intervention systems and practices.

SECTION 4: EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES FOR LITERACY

WHAT ARE EBPs?

Most educators want to use tools and strategies that will help their students succeed - but how do we know which ones work? EBPs are "effective educational strategies supported by evidence and research" (ESEA, 2002). When used with fidelity, EBPs are tools that educators can use to improve classroom learning. IDEA and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) require schools use programs, curricula and practices that are based in extensive, scientific research that shows their effectiveness which would allow effective implementation of an MTSS program. The research base should have a sound design, provide high-quality data and involve peer review for each program or strategy that a school uses. According to ESSA, there are four tiers of evidence that can help guide educators in choosing appropriate practices and interventions for their students:

- Strong: supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented randomized control experimental studies.
- Moderate: supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental studies.
- Promising: supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented correlational studies (with statistical controls for selection bias).
- Demonstrates a Rationale: practices that have a well-defined logic model or theory of action, are supported by research, and have some effort underway by a state education agency (SEA), local education agency (LEA), or outside research organization to determine their effectiveness.

Not all research can show the causal relationship between a program and literacy outcomes, but identifying the right practices that are most likely to support your students is critical for the program's success. Exploring and knowing the research in your chosen area can help build investment in chosen practices. In the table below, shows databases that can support the search for EBPs. Appendix C also provides a list of strategies and approaches broken down by literacy skills.

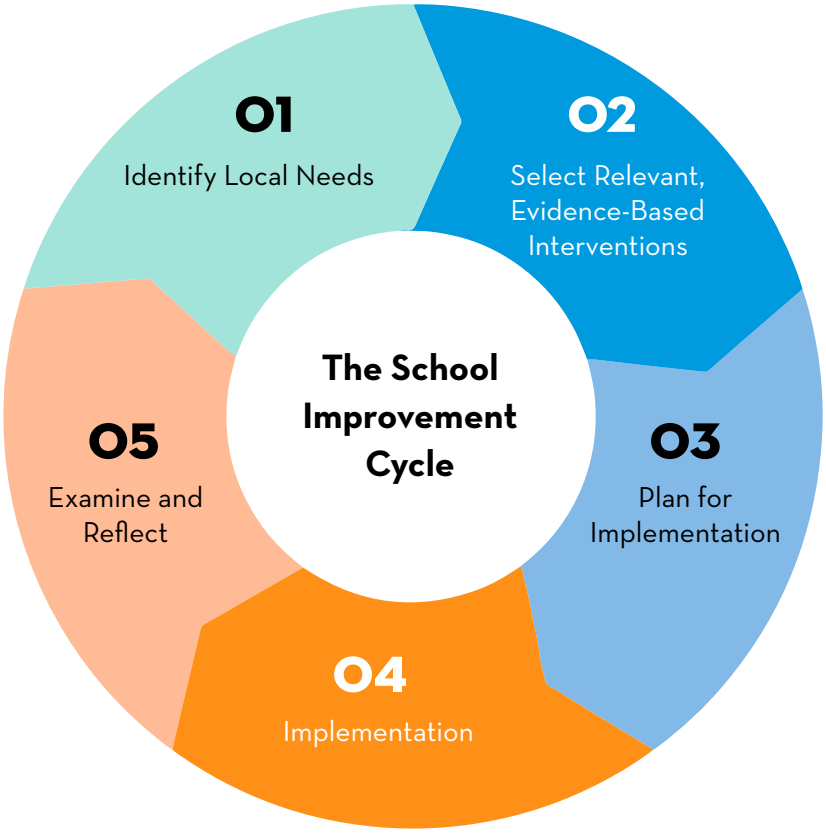
ORGANIZATION	DESCRIPTION
What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)	The WWC website provides searchable reviews of existing research in a wide variety of areas such as mathematics, literacy, science, dropout prevention, teacher excellence and working with English learners, among others.
Evidence for ESSA	This searchable website, developed by researchers at the Center for Research and Reform in Education (CRRE) at Johns Hopkins University, reviews math and reading programs for grades K to 12 to determine which meet the strong, moderate, or promising levels of evidence.
Ideas that Work	This resource from the Department of Education shares resources to support students in reaching the College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS) through EBPs. Their site shares ideas and resources for supporting academics and social emotional wellbeing.
Florida Center for Reading Research	This resource from Florida State University hosts a database of EBPs that support reading development.

For more information on EBPs, consult the IRIS Center's EBPs Modules. The next section will discuss why EBPs are important for educators and schools.

HOW TO SELECT AND USE EBPs?

Choosing which EBP to use with the wide variety of initiatives, practices and programs can be challenging. The databases outlined in the table above are helpful for discovering practices, alongside other factors that educators must consider. When multiple practices or programs seem to meet a school's needs, educators should consider contextual factors including the school's population, staffing availability and professional learning needs and availability. In order for the practice to be effective, teams must consider and plan for these and other important contextual factors. Attention to detail and careful selection of the right practice involves deep analysis of each program within the context of the school and district.

Once schools have selected an EPB to use, schools must establish an implementation plan for use which includes monitoring or data collection. The school's instructional leadership team should contribute to this plan and all key stakeholders should be represented in its implementation. Dates of checkpoints to measure and evaluate implementation, key considerations and details of coaching, professional learning, training and implementation must be mapped out in alignment with the school calendar. For example, teams may schedule quarterly data reviews aligned to the term schedule. At these points of review, teams will determine which key things will stay the same and which are able to be changed, what additional trainings or coaching may be needed, and how the plan will evolve. The model described here is also captured in the School Improvement Cycle pictured below.



Under the ESSA, districts and schools have flexibility to choose interventions to improve student outcomes. District and school leaders are encouraged to choose evidence-based interventions that have been shown to improve student outcomes. By selecting interventions taht have been rigorously studied and have improved student learning, district and school leaders increase the likelihood that student achievement will improve.

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/pdf/blogs/RELMW-ESSA-Tiers-Video-Handout-508.pdf

SECTION 5: DIVERSE LEARNERS

SUPPORTS FOR MULTILINGUAL AND ENGLISH LEARNERS

OSSE views multilingualism as an asset, and values that we are a multilingual and multicultural city, with more than 125 language spoken across the District. Literacy for English learners is framed within a vision for success in which all the District's English learners will have equitable, meaningful access to high-quality academic and linguistic programs in an inclusive, welcoming environment. To put this vision into action, literacy instruction must be responsive to English learners, enabling them to grow their proficiency in listening, reading, speaking, and writing in English, as framed by OSSE's foundational principles for serving English learners, the District's WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards Framework and Common Core Stte Standards (CCSS).

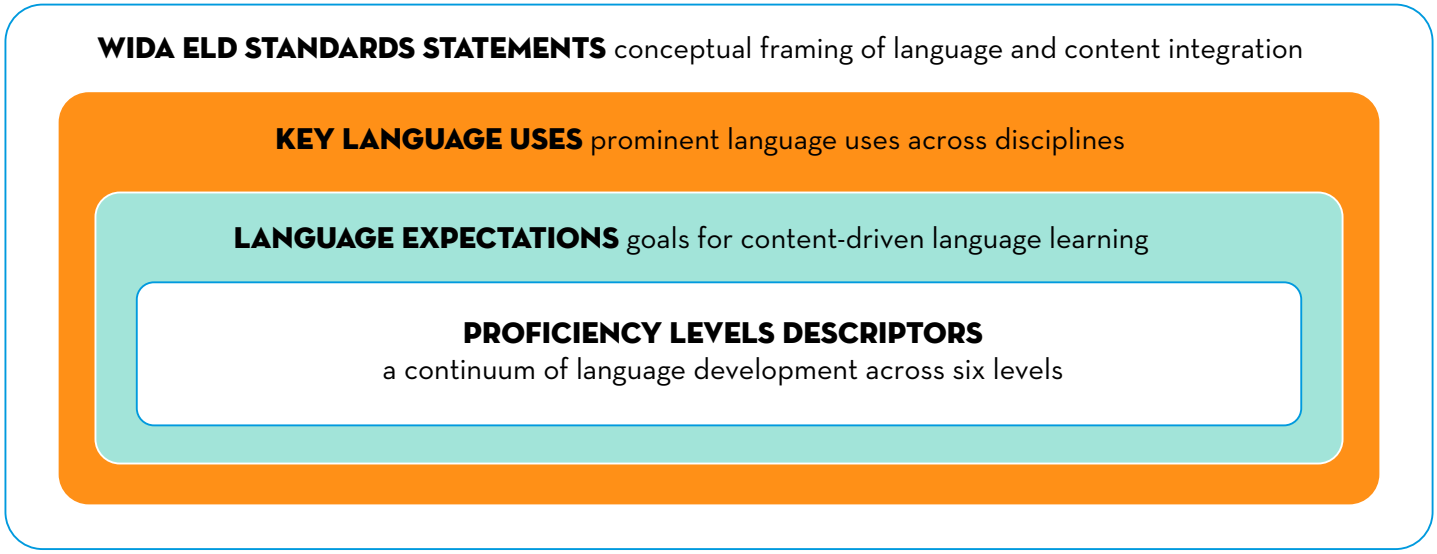
Under federal law, LEAs must provide an effective language instruction education program, or EL program, to English learners so they may develop proficiency in English. To compare and contrast EL program types and consider which is most appropriate for your school and students, refer to EL program overviews and OSSE dual language resources. Regardless of the program type selected, it should be implemented in alignment with the WIDA ELD Standards framework and should advance students' language proficiency, literacy, and academic achievement.

This chapter provides a framework for standards-based literacy and language development practices for serving English learners in English-based programs and bilingual/dual language programs, outlining common practices as well as unique features of literacy for English learners in these two approaches. It also addresses biliteracy for native English-speaking students in bilingual dual language programs.

VISION FOR SUCCESS: ALL OF THE DISTRICT'S ENGLISH LEARNERS WILL HAVE EQUITABLE, MEANINGFUL ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY ACADEMIC AND LINGUISTIC PROGRAMS IN AN INCLUSIVE, WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT.	
FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES	**CONNECTIONS ACROSS STATE ELA STANDARDS AND WIDA ELD STANDARDS FRAMEWORK**
Value the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of all EL students.	• English learners' identities, language, and culture are represented as a valued part of the school and literacy instruction.
Partner with families, educators, system leaders, and communities to nurture EL students' linguistic, academic, social, and emotional development.	• ELA teachers, reading specialists, ELD teachers, and other educators across the curriculum use collaborative practices, e.g., co-planning, co-teaching, and co-data reviews to support English learners. • Educators encourage home language literacy and development through two-way family engagement.
Provide EL students access to grade-level academic content and English language instruction that are appropriate for advancing their language proficiency and academic achievement.	• Instruction is driven by content and language objectives based on the WIDA ELD Standards and state ELA standards. • Instruction provides rich opportunities for students to speak, listen, read, and write purposefully about academic content. • Integrated content and language instruction advanced English learners' proficiency in English and academic knowledge.

Use multiple sources of data to inform and continually refine EL programs, services, instruction and assessment.	• Educators use the WIDA ELD performance level definitions, rubrics, and standards to:
	  • Set annual language development goals;
	  • Discuss students' goals and progress with them;
	  • Assess students' progress in listening, reading, speaking, and writing regularly; and
	  • Use formative and summative data to adjust instruction and scaffolds and set new goals.

WIDA ELD STANDARDS FRAMEWORK



The WIDA ELD Standards Framework drills down from the concept of content and language integration to guide planning for intentional instruction that aligns with language uses across content areas. The framework provides language expectations that teachers can use to create objectives for language learning, within descriptors for levels of proficiency in English, to reflect how students' linguistic resources grow as they gain proficiency in the English language.

Literacy and English Learners in English-based English as a Second Language Programs

What is Different About Developing Literacy Skills for English Learners?

In contrast to many of their native English-speaking peers, English learners expend a lot of energy during instructional and homework time trying to understand what they are reading and figure out how to write their thoughts in English. English learners require interactive literacy instruction integrated with WIDA's ELD Standards that emphasizes relevance and comprehension in order to overcome gaps in meaning and concept knowledge. This view of language is embodied in the five faceted approach to English learners' literacy success:

VOCABULARY:
Developing skills in word recognition.

CONCEPTS:
Connecting new words to what students do or do not already know.

PHONEMIC AWARENESS:
Recognizing, saying, and writing the sounds of the English language.

FLUENCY:
Decoding, phrasing, and emoting for feeling and comprehension.

RELEVANCE:
Instruction that honors a student's identity and interests.

WATCH:
Effective English literacy instruction for English learners!

COMMON LITERACY INSTRUCTION PRACTICES ACROSS LANGUAGE PROGRAM TYPES

Regardless of an LEA's English learner program type, there are 10, common literacy instructional practices for ELs:

1.	Exposure to a rigorous curriculum.
2.	Supported literacy learning at home.
3.	Daily structured opportunities to practice academic speaking, listening, reading and writing.
4.	Attention to vocabulary development, phonics and decoding.
5.	Native language supports, such as teaching students how to use tools, e.g., a bilingual (picture) dictionary, and establishing expectations for using the tools.
6.	Planning for maximal engagement by providing culturally responsive instruction that represents students' interests, experiences and backgrounds in a positive light.
7.	Reading comprehension strategies such as: ☐ Partner reading with time to alternate between reading the text and summarizing. ☐ Shared reading (choral reading, reader's theater and echo reading). ☐ Close reading. ☐ Building background knowledge. ☐ Frequent structured interactions with peers to build knowledge of texts. ☐ Opportunities to collaborate with peers on writing assignments and projects.
8.	Scaffolds to increase access to instructional material and support English learners in demonstrating their learning: ☐ Adapted texts that are differentiated to be accessible for readers at different levels. ☐ Graphic organizers such as character webs and timelines. ☐ Realia, visuals and related media to support concept attainment. ☐ Sentence starters, sentence/paragraph/essay frames.
9.	Frequent checks for understanding.
10.	Opportunities to build cross-language connections.

LITERACY PRACTICES TO SUPPORT ENGLISH LEARNERS BASED ON DIFFERENT NEEDS

WIDA's English Language Development Standards Framework recognizes the unique needs of English learners at different grade bands with respect to their developmental level, content area expectations, and English language proficiency level. While each student comes to school at different stages of their English learning journey and with different strengths and background experiences, there are some general trends, discussed below, that teachers may see in certain grade bands and categories.Beyond age- and grade-level distinctions, English learners' needs for certain English language development supports will vary. Each of the categories below describe English learners' unique needs to meet their literacy goals.

English learners in **secondary** settings may vary greatly in their prior English language development trajectories.

Related literacy resources:

- What Works Clearinghouse - Literacy ELs MS Practice Guide
- Integrating English language development into ELA and Social Studies - secondary

In **elementary** school, English learners are developing complex communication skills in their home language(s) as their academic English usage and comprehension grows.

Related literacy resources:

- Interactive read alouds demonstration
- Collaborative online interactive writing instruction
- A teaching routine for academic

In **early childhood**, English learners are simultaneously learning English and their home language(s).

Related literacy resources:

- WIDA's Focus Bulletin on the Early Years and Literacy
- MTSS for ELs' Implementing Interactive Read Alouds for ELs bilingual lesson planning tool.
- WIDA'sEarly Languge Development Standards.

- **Newcomers** students are new to the US and may vary in their familiarity with English language reading and writing as well as American culture. Educators should focus on developing language and literacy as well as vocabulary and new concepts. This Newcomer Toolkit features recommendations for planning high-quality instruction for newcomers.
- **Long-term English learners** are English learners who have been in an English learner program for several years. Long-Term English Learners: Spotlight on an Overlooked Population identifies instructional practices for LTEs.
- **Students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE)** have not had opportunities to engage in age-appropriate formal education, unlike other English learners. Regardless of whether an SLIFE has significant educational gaps due to interrupted or limited formal education, they typically have low literacy and unfamiliarity with typical school practices. Focus on SLIFE addresses the unique needs of SLIFE in school settings while Ten Ideas for Teaching S(L)IFE showcases practices teachers can use right away.
- **Monitored ELs (ELms)** received a qualifying score on the annual ACCESS for ELLs English language proficiency assessment within the last four years. Teachers continue to monitor their academic progress to ensure they can meet the demands of instruction without the need for additional English language supports (see section 2.4 Monitoring literacy development in English learners). Where concerns arise, school teams may consider a multitiered system of support (MTSS) to uncover and address concerns using a tool such as this culturally responsive rubric for response to intervention within MTSS.

MONITORING ENGLISH LEARNERS' LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

Ongoing monitoring of literacy development is important to measure growth, plan for instructional supports and alert educators to a potential reading and/or writing problem. Teachers should design goals for literacy development respective of an English learner's English language proficiency level and share the goals with the students prior to conducting progress assessments. Formative Assessment for English Learners in Distance Learning shows how to collect data from structured oral interactions and collaborative writing activities. This sample progress monitoring tool may assist teachers in collecting data on English learners' literacy development.

HOME-SCHOOL CONNECTIONS

Family involvement in their child's learning is crucial for academic success. Norms around family involvement in schooling can vary by country and region; therefore, educators' efforts to help families make literacy home-school connections should be asset-based, culturally responsive and respectful to families. Families and caregivers, including those with low literacy skills, can use their home language or English to:

- Have a conversation and ask questions about what they hear, read, or do;
- Talk, draw, or write about experiences using new vocabulary; and
- Ensure children have opportunities to practice using new vocabulary and on their own (orally and/or in writing).

Ready Rosie, Cox Campus and MTSS for ELs offer multilingual models of home literacy practices.

LITERACY INSTRUCTION IN DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

Why is biliteracy instruction important for English learners and emergent bilinguals? Dual language programs give students that are identified as English learners the support needed for their linguistic development and take affirmative steps to ensure that English learners can meaningfully participate in education programs and services. Speaking to this requirement, the use of two languages as mediums of instruction can be used for any part or all of the curriculum of pre-K through Grade 12 within the dual language program implemented.

Highly effective literacy instruction in dual language programs involves three key leadership tasks:

- Defining the dual language program model
- The content and language allocation plan
- Planning and delivering instruction in two languages

DEFINING THE DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Successful biliteracy instruction in dual language programs have a clear definition that guides the decision-making process to ensure that schools initiatives are aligned with the program goals and support the improvement and sustainability of highly effective instruction for all English learners and emergent bilinguals. Dual language programs goals for all students, including English learners, are to:

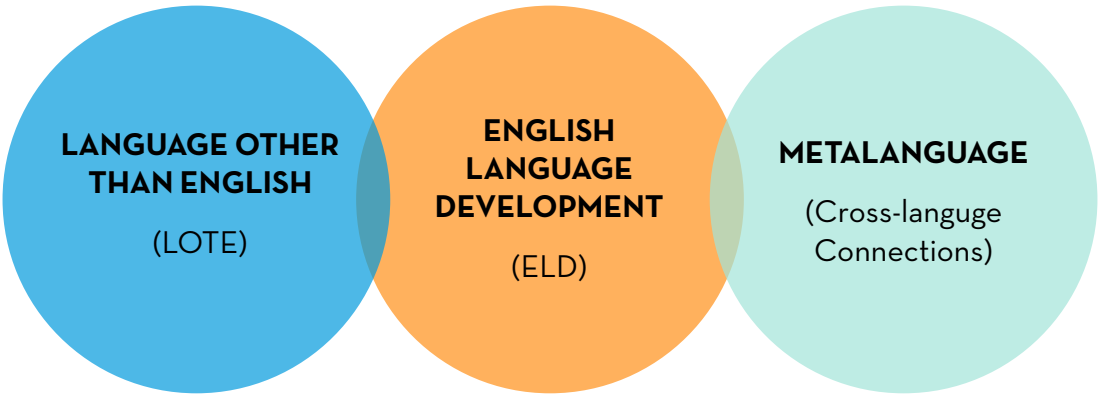
- Become bilingual and biliterate in English and a second language (with the literacy component integrating the development of skills in two languages in the domains of listening, speaking, reading and writing);
- Provide for the educational needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students; and
- Meet academic content standards and benchmarks in all subject areas.

OSSE's office of multilingual education provides technical assistance and support in defining instructional programs for multilingual education. The DC Dual Language Roadmap provides more details about dual language program models and definitions.

CONTENT AND LANGUAGE ALLOCATION PLAN

The content and language allocation plan allows school leaders and educators to identify the content and language of instruction in each grade where bilingual instruction is provided. Additionally, the instructional schedule is evidence that reflects the three moments of instruction in a dual language context. Without explicit attention to language status and program model fidelity, the benefits of dual language instruction may not be as strong for English learners as for English speakers (Collier & Thomas, 2003).

Qualities of Instruction to Develop Biliteracy and Language Skills. Dual language programming entails improving academic achievement for English learners and emergent bilinguals through explicitly planning literacy instruction in the three aspects of biliteracy:



Biliteracy practices are not duplicative and do not involve concurrent translation across languages. There is a dedicated instructional time for each language of instruction where students are acquiring and practicing language and access grade level content. Learning literacy skills in a second language does not interfere with acquiring subject-area knowledge or with maintaining one's first language.

Content and Language Allocation in a Dual Language Program

AREA OF INSTRUCTION	CHARACTERISTICS	RESOURCES
Authentic instruction in Languages Other Than English (LOTE)	• Includes the planning of standards-based learning experiences in the partner language (Spanish, Chinese, French, etc.) • This instruction should be at least 50% of instructional time • The instruction of Language Arts in LOTE is a non-negotiable for effective biliteracy in addition to one or more content areas • The use of speaking, listening, reading, and writing in a wide range or purposes in all content areas • Educators are in charge to create a literacy rich learning environment to practice social language but also to develop the academic language needed to gain knowledge in a content area	• WIDA English Language Development Standards, 2020 Edition • Key Language Uses • Planning instruction for emergent bilinguals
Literacy-based ELD	• Is standards-based instruction with opportunities to acquire, learn, and practice language in listening, speaking, reading, and writing • Must always consider what English learners and emergent bilinguals have learned in LOTE and not reteach concepts that students already know, e.g., directionality; context clues, and letters that make words, words that make sentences, and sentences make paragraphs • Must avoid a monolingual view of language and literacy instruction • Recognizes the dynamic of using two or more languages in combination for a wide range of purposes	• WIDA English Language Development Standards, 2020 Edition • WIDA Standards Statements • WIDA Can Do descriptors
Metalanguage	• Is thinking and talking about language • An opportunity to understand the relationships between and within languages • Allows students to analyze how language can be leveraged to express meaning (Escamilla, 2015) • An instructional time dedicated to acknowledging the influence of the second language and build on the wealth of the linguistic and academic knowledge in each student • The purposes of cross-language connections (Bridging), are: (1) to help students transfer academic language learned in one language to the other language, and (2) engage in constructive analysis by focusing on how languages are similar and different (Beeman & Urow, 2013)	• Cross-language connection strategies • Appendix D. Considerations for Cross-Language Connections • Appendix E. Bilingual Behaviors

Planning and Delivering Instruction in Two Languages

Planning for biliteracy guides literacy instruction in two languages. It also includes equal attention of instruction dedicated to four domains: oracy (speaking and listening), reading, writing and metalanguage (cross-language connections). "The teaching of these literacy skills is critical for the development of a robust biliteracy program for English learners and emergent bilinguals (Escamilla, 2014, p.62)." Best practices for biliteracy instruction include:

- The design of units of learning to help students in acquiring knowledge and language skills in LOTE, with the intention to reinforce knowledge and skill during the instruction in English;
- The planning for biliteracy including a diverse range of teaching and learning activities that occurs in the three areas of instruction across the curriculum;
- Focusing not only on language of instruction, but also on quality of instruction in each language; and
- Explicit teaching of cross-language connections. (August & Shanahan, 2006; Gersten & Baker, 2000; Thomas & Collier, 2003).

See **Appendix F** for more details about features of planning for biliteracy.

Educators Delivering Instruction in a Dual Language Program

Literacy learning is enhanced when teachers are reflective and aware of their own strengths and challenges. Professional learning where topics target specific knowledge, skills and strategies related to second language acquisition and simultaneous literacy instruction in two languages. All teachers of literacy in LOTE require specialized professional development on how to teach that language in the US context. Effective biliteracy educators embrace a holistic multilingual perspective on teaching, learning and assessments that sees two (or more) languages that each student speaks as complementary arts of the student's developing linguistic repertoire.

LEAs are responsible for providing equal opportunities for English learners and emergent bilinguals to receive standard-based high-quality instruction to develop literacy skills in two languages. Therefore, dual language programs should be developed to have a clear biliteracy trajectory that identifies the language of instruction for each content area in the grades where bilingual instruction is provided. Visit OSSE's dual language website for more information.

READING DIFFICULTIES IN STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

A large majority of students with disabilities encounter reading difficulties based on organic and environmental factors which may affect their ability to adequately achieve grade-level expectations related to phonemic awareness, phonological processing, vocabulary acquisition and comprehension (Carreteiro et al., 2016). Although a student may have been diagnosed with reading difficulties, ongoing student assessment within MTSS is beneficial in developing a student's individual academic program and monitoring growth. Screening, progress monitoring and data-based decision-making are necessary components of MTSS that must be followed in order to inform instruction and implement appropriate interventions.

SCREENING

Assessing the elements of reading fluency is considered integral in the achievement of reading proficiency for students with reading difficulties. The strong correlation between students' reading fluency and reading comprehension promotes the reasoning for targeted skill instruction in the components of reading fluency (Hudson et al., 2005). The following reading components in Table 1 illustrate the relationship in reading fluency and comprehension:

Correlations Between Reading Fluency and Reading Comprehension

READING COMPONENTS	EFFECTS ON FLUENCY AND COMPREHENSION
Automaticity and Working Memory	higher order thinking skills are developed when words are instinctively pronounced; working memory capacity to decode is not overloaded
Reading Accuracy and Reading Proficiency	proficient phonological awareness, phonics skill acquisition and sight word recognition promotes comprehension
Reading Rate and Reading Proficiency	ability to automatically and fluidly read words allows cognitive resources to be available to comprehend text
Prosody and Reading Proficiency	ability to read with appropriate intonation, duration, and pitch promotes comprehension
Assessing Reading Fluency	consistent progress monitoring through observation and probes provides growth information and instructional needs
Assessing Accuracy	conducting running records and determining words errors per 100 words allows the analysis of reading patterns and potential skill building strategies

Possible Reading Screening tools include:

- aimswebPlus
- Benchmark Passages
- Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Skills (DIBELS)
- Gray Oral Reading Test, Fourth Edition (GORT-5)
- Reading Fluency Monitor by Reading Naturally
- TOWRE-2 Test of Word Reading Efficiency

All students with reading difficulties should receive a reading screening at specific points throughout the school year (i.e., beginning, middle, end) as part of a Multi-tiered System of Supports to assess benchmark scores, as well as growth and performance. Student performance should be analyzed in accordance with individual student growth goals and learning profile.

In the administration of screening tools, it is recommended that (a) grade-level expectations correspond to the screening measure, (b) screening materials are related to the current or past instruction, and (c) the scores are predictive of student performance. Procedures for administering, collecting and scoring the screening data must be valid and reliable.

PROGRESS MONITORING FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

As outlined in Literacy Guiding Principle 3, instruction for students with reading disabilities should be individualized and include a consistent and ongoing review of student progress to inform decisions about the effectiveness of the specific intervention. If the student is not making adequate progress toward set goals, an alternative intervention may be needed.

Students' progress will be indicated by monitoring their fluency on reading passages and recording student data, including *words correct per minute* (WCPM) scores on a graph or chart. Information about progress monitoring tools and interventions can be found on the National Center for Intensive Intervention website.

The frequency and duration of progress monitoring will be dependent on a student's reading level, intervention implemented and student's level of performance. Progress monitoring data should include students' reading strengths and challenges which will support providing appropriate interventions and individualized instruction. Students with significant reading deficits (i.e., reading one year or more below grade level), should receive individual or small group instruction by a trained and qualified professional (e.g., special education teacher, intervention specialist, literary specialist).

Data-based Decision-making

Educators make instructional decisions based on assessment results. These data are used to develop student profiles, select interventions, and choose specific strategies to support reading growth. The analysis of assessment data helps with decision-making regarding professional development and training activities for teachers and staff. Educators have the opportunity to work collaboratively to meet student trends and can be identified in order to develop goal-oriented outcomes.

Instruction

Tiered instruction is offered with specific components practiced based on a student's profile. Many students with reading difficulties receiving leveled instruction are in Tier III and receive intensive, individualized instruction. Students may also receive appropriate accommodations within the general education classroom which allow them to access the general education curriculum with their peers without reading difficulties. Referencing the dually differentiated curriculum (Table 1-above) and the Universal Design for Learning principles will (a) support student engagement and motivation, (b) allow students the ability to receive instruction based on their individual style of learning, and (c) offer students with several ways to demonstrate their understanding of the content.

Evidence- and Research-Based Practices

Students with reading difficulties should be provided with evidence- and research-based instruction and strategies to support their reading acquisition. Students matriculating from K-12 grade levels may find that these practices are more effective depending upon the grade band (elementary, middle, or secondary) or age.

The practices and strategies in Table 3, that can be effective based upon the learning characteristics or profile of the student (Connor, Alberto, Compton, and O'Connor, 2014):

EVIDENCE- AND RESEARCH-BASED INTERVENTIONS	DESCRIPTION OF INTERVENTIONS	LEARNING CHARACTERISTICS	DESCRIPTION OF IMPROVEMENT
Prevention through Intensity of Instruction	Intensive interventions early	Low reading skill levels	Increasing intensity is an effective practice for students with disabilities or at risk of being identified with a disability; may prevent reading difficulties

For more examples of evidence- and research-based practices in Reading Acquisition, see **Appendix G**.

Accommodations and Modifications

Accommodations permit students to access the curriculum and demonstrate their understanding without reducing the information or expectations of student performance. Students may receive specific accommodations during instruction and on assessments according to the information contained in their individualized education program (IEP) or 504 Plan.

Accommodations increase the accessibility of standard measures of reading (Improving Reading Outcomes, Dept. of Ed, 2014). The types of accommodations students receive is determined by their individual characteristics and behavior within a classroom environment during instruction and testing. Accommodations provided are reflected in students': a) response, b) timing and scheduling, c) setting, and d) presentation.

Examples of accommodations that may be utilized within instructional environments may include:

- Read-aloud - supports students with vision impairments and fluency disorders
- Audio-version - supports students with vision impairments and fluency disorders
- Large print - supports students with vision impairments
- Braille - supports students with vision impairments
- Shorter segments - supports students with working memory deficits and attention issues
- Culturally relevant texts/passages - provides opportunity to support motivation and engagement

Modifications for students with reading difficulties allows for the alteration of texts and materials in a variety of formats which support accessibility of the information. Opportunities for the modification of content can be shown by using:

- Electronic books (e-books)
- Leveled curriculum
- Text selection options
- Different format/questions on assessments
- Alternative assignments/projects

OSSE has provided an Accommodations Adaptations Matrix which provides types, descriptions and examples of accommodations that students with disabilities may access in a distance, hybrid, or in-person learning environment.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Overview of Assistive Technology

The IDEA has specific requirements for educators to include not only what students will learn, but how they will access information in order to learn. An accommodation that can effectively address how students may access text is through the use of assistive technology (AT). AT includes any equipment, products and systems designed to improve or maintain, or improve the functional learning of students with disabilities (ATIA, 2021; IDEA, 2004). They serve as a support that is related to function rather than a specific disability; however, they may be made available to all students with a disability in order to remove barriers to performance (OCALI, 2013). When used appropriately, AT is an effective way to maximize students' access to general education curricula and allow students to demonstrate their learning by multiple means (Ahmad, 2015). A growing body of research indicates that the use of AT can improve outcomes of students with disabilities (Natale et al., 2020) by addressing functional barriers in an effort to increase, improve and maintain outcomes of learners (Ahmad, 2015). There are a variety of types of assistive technologies, ranging from simple to complex that may be used to support student learning (see Table 1).

Table 4: General Types of Assistive Technology

GENERAL ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY (AT)	
Type of Assistive Technology	***Examples***
Low-tech	Communication boards, graphic organizers
High-tech	Computers, tablets
Computer software	Screen readers, communication programs
Computer hardware	Special keyboards and pointing devices
Specialized learning materials and curriculum aids	Computer-assisted instruction

Assistive Technology Selection and Monitoring

Students with disabilities who have difficulty with seeing, hearing, pointing, remembering and speaking (to name a few) may use AT to access instruction (ATIA, 2021). The selection of the most appropriate AT is as important as its use and how its use by students is monitored. The selection of AT should be based on the individual student and data collected to support its use. The IEP team, including the parent and student, should discuss the student's needs and appropriate technology to address those needs in the student's IEP. It is required by IDEA to consider AT when developing students' IEPs. Information on how including AT in IEPs can be found by visiting, Center on Technology and Disability. Careful attention should be made to ensure AT is appropriate and when it is not because it may also be a barrier for students. When selecting AT, it is important for IEP team members to take into consideration whether the student needs these supports for remediation or compensation; as they are applicable for both purposes (The Iris Center, 2020). Additional information on AT can be found here: Accommodations/Modifications.

Monitoring the use of AT should be conducted regularly to ensure that students are receiving the benefit it is intended to provide. Knowing and understanding students' strengths and areas of challenge can help teachers to effectively support students (The Iris Center, 2020). It is essential for educators to collect student data on performance frequently, over a period of time (The Iris Center, 2020). Data collected should reflect student performance with and without use of AT for evaluative purposes (The Iris Center, 2020). According to The Iris Center (2020), in order for the use of AT to be effective, it must be used throughout the instructional day, every day. As such, monitoring student performance while using AT needs to occur as frequently as possible.

Use of Assistive Technology in Reading

The use of AT by students with disabilities has been effective in enhancing literacy skills. It has been used by educators to support the needs of students with disabilities for decades (Svensson et al., 2019). Reading demands students to utilize multiple skills from phonemic awareness to reading comprehension. For students with a disability, this may be quite taxing. Reading comprehension can be severely impacted as a result of students spending a lot of time decoding and trying to make meaning of words (Forgrave, 2002). There are several ways in which educators can make accommodations for students in order to make text accessible to students (see Table 2). Students with learning disabilities and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder have benefited from text to speech readers to help them to successfully access general education content. According to research, text to speech tools are significantly effective in improving reading comprehension of students with disabilities compared to not using this accommodation (Keelor, Creaghead, Silbert, & Horowitz-Kraus, 2020) and should be considered for students spending a lot of time with decoding. Proper training of appropriate school staff, students and parents of AT is essential for its effectiveness. Whenever possible, students should have the opportunity to practice using AT to ensure they are familiar with how to use it to increase their outcomes (The Iris Center, 2020).

Table 5: Assistive Technology for Reading

CONTINUUM OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR READING
Book adapted for access
Low-tech modifications to text
Handheld device to read individual words
Use of pictures/symbols with text
Electronic text
Modified electronic text
Text to speech reader
Scanner with Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and text reader
Text reader with study skill support

Assessing Students' Needs for Assistive Technology (2009)

TYPES OF READING DIFFICULTIES

As shared in the introduction, The Simple View of Reading (SVR) (Gough & Tunmer, 1986) provides a clear, effective framework for understanding broad categories of reading difficulties. The SVR posits that reading comprehension is the product of language comprehension and decoding. The language comprehension component includes background knowledge, vocabulary, syntax, verbal reasoning and literacy knowledge (Scarborough, 2001) while the decoding component includes both decoding and word recognition (Kilpatrick, 2020). Decoding is the process of connecting letters to sounds and blending the sounds to pronounce a word, and word recognition is the immediate, effortless recall of words that are stored in a person's "sight" word bank (Ehri, 2005).

The graphic below (Oakhill et al., 2020) illustrates the broad categories of readers based on the SVR:
While the word "simple" is part of the SVR, the SVR framework does not imply that reading comprehension is simple. Instead, it means that the variation in reading ability can be "simply" captured by the variation in the two skills, language comprehension and decoding (Oakhill et al., 2019). Indeed, both components of the SVR are necessary for reading comprehension: Strength in one component cannot compensate for weakness in the other; rather, weakness in either area compromises reading comprehension.

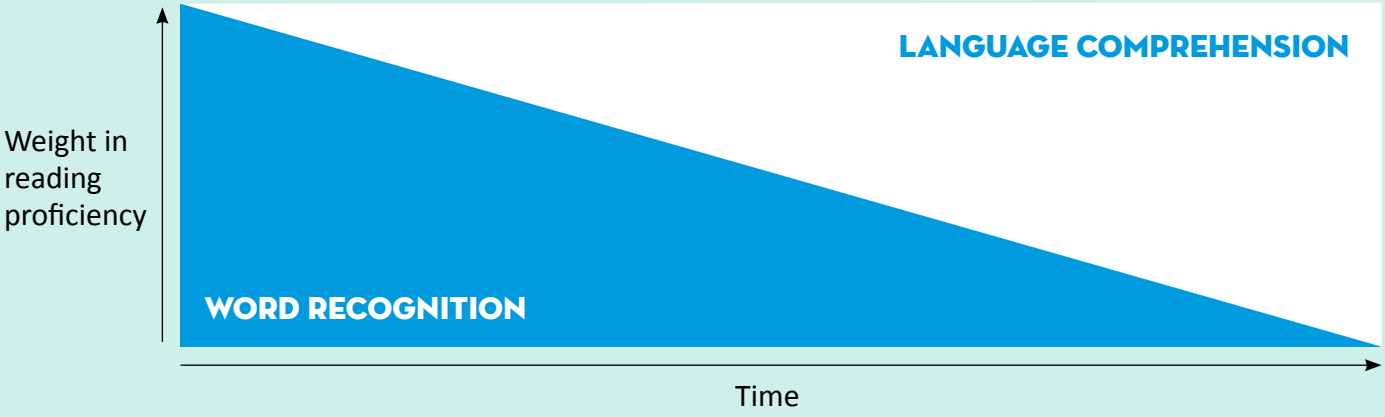
	LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION	
WORD READING	**POOR**	**GOOD**
POOR	Generally poor reader	Dyslexic
GOOD	Poor comprehender	Good reader

The SVR has significant implications for understanding reading difficulties and screening for them. It is important to consider that while the SVR represents reading comprehension as a product with each component contributing equally, the relative contributions of language comprehension and decoding vary across the course of reading development. Among beginning readers, decoding plays a much larger role than language comprehension due the fact that decoding presents a much greater cognitive challenge at this stage and that texts for young children typically do not present complex sentence structures and sophisticated vocabulary. As children become more proficient at decoding and develop a larger sight-word vocabulary or orthographic lexicon, their language comprehension abilities play a larger role in their reading comprehension (Oakhill et al., 2019).

The graphic below illustrates these changes over the course of development (Research to Action, 2020, p. 34):

As students master decoding and start encountering more complex text, reading comprehension becomes increasingly dependent on background knowledge and vocabulary.

Even though reading proficiency in K-3 is heavily dependent on the foundational skills that support decoding, later reading will suffer if students do not also start building the vocabulary and background knowledge they need to comprehend increasingly complex texts they will encounter as they move into the upper grades.



In the early grades, ability to read grade-level texts is largely determined by decoding skill, so decoding instruction often produces immediate gains in reading proficiency. However, those gains may not transfer to later grades if teachers have not simultaneously build student's background knowledge and vocabulary.

"Decoding has a really outsized role on reading comprehension in the early grades. But as students consolidate their decoding, very quickly that equation shifts." (Cervetti, 2019)

Source(s): Schwartz (2019); Cervetti (2019).

These findings lead the following recommendations regarding reading difficulties:

- Because language comprehension and decoding contribute to reading comprehension differently at different points in time, it is important to assess both components independently for the purposes of screening, diagnosis and progress monitoring. For instance, phonemic awareness, decoding and sight recognition should all be assessed independently. Assessing these areas independently allows for greater insight into the source(s) of the student's difficulty.
- The decoding component can be measured with phonemic awareness assessments that include blending and analysis tasks (segmenting and manipulating phonemes), word reading tasks and nonsense word reading tasks. Nonsense word reading tasks are the best way to understand a student's word reading skill (Share, 1995; Kilpatrick, 2015).
- The components of linguistic comprehension can be more difficult to assess due to the fact that these abilities continue to develop throughout the elementary and secondary years, whereas the components that contribute to decoding become fully automatic earlier in development. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind oral language development (vocabulary depth and breadth, words per utterance and syntax complexity) as well as the development of background knowledge, as these factors can contribute to specific comprehension deficits (Oakhill et al., 2019).
- Interventions and goals should aim to focus on a child's particular need(s), rather than on comprehension goals or reading levels. Comprehension goals are difficult to measure and comprehension assessments differ greatly in what they measure (Cutting & Scarborough, 2009). Reading level assessments conflate language comprehension and decoding, making it impossible to know the cause of a student's difficulty. Additionally, leveled reading assessments may use predictable text, making it easier for students to guess at words, and may not be nationally normed or matched to grade-level expectations.

Screening

As mentioned earlier, screeners are a type of assessment that are used to predict risk. Screeners for reading difficulties can predict with high levels of accuracy which students may struggle to read proficiently due to dyslexia, developmental language disorder, or another disability. Screening supports a prevention-based approach by allowing students at risk of reading difficulties to receive support and intervention before they start to have difficulty, rather than after they have experienced failure. Indeed, early, frequent screening constitutes a key feature of a prevention model in contrast to a "wait to fail" model (Vaughn & Fletcher, 2020). The "wait to fail" approach (Ozernov-Palchik and Gaab, 2016) is characterized by a diagnosis of a reading difficulty, often dyslexia, as late as second grade, by which the time window for the most effective intervention has passed. Additionally, by second or third grade, the gap between proficient and poor readers has widened, and negative consequences of reading difficulty—including limited vocabulary and background knowledge, lack of interest or motivation to read, and low confidence or self-esteem—are well established (Catts & Hogan, 2021). In a preventive model, students are provided Tier 1 instruction in reading that is evidence-based and code-focused, making it easier to determine which students are at risk and resulting in fewer students needing interventions in the later years, when they are both more costly and less effective (Ozernov-Palchik & Gaab, 2016). The innumerable benefits to children of early screening outweigh any logistical, administrative, or financial cost in the short term (Gaab, 2017).

Early screening should include the following factors (Gaab, 2017):

- Be short, or brief, to administer;
- Be comprehensive, and address key domains: phonological awareness, letter knowledge, rapid automatized naming, vocabulary, listening comprehension and family history;
- Be done early, ideally as early as preschool but no later than kindergarten;
- Be inclusive of language and dialect diversity;
- Be aware of neurobiology and genetics by asking about a family history of reading difficulties.

The factors that are most salient for screening purposes vary across the developmental trajectory. Family history often offers important clues about reading risk, so family history questionnaires should be part of a reading screener. Additionally, when selecting a validated screener, it is important to consider its incorporation and understanding of both language and dialect variation. Students of color are often overrepresented in special education broadly, yet under-represented in the speech and language and specific learning disability categories (Washington & Lee-James, 2020). For information about screening see:

- Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports
- Assessments and Progress Monitoring

Table 1: Suggestions for what screeners should assess at various points in time:

PRE-K3/4	KINDERGARTEN-SECOND GRADE
• Oral language development • Phonological Awareness • Rapid Naming Skills • Family History of difficulty learning to read	• Oral language development • Phonological Awareness • Rapid Naming Skills • Family History of difficulty learning to read • Correspondence between sounds and letters using at least a Nonsense Word Assessment • Decoding ability using at least a Nonsense Word Assessment • Oral reading fluency
BEYOND SECOND GRADE	
Beyond second grade, students should be routinely screened for reading ability. For a typically developing reader, a silent reading comprehension assessment may be sufficient. However, especially through Grade 5, an oral reading fluency measure may be necessary to determine any weaknesses in word recognition and oral reading ability. Following an oral reading fluency measure, if a student is not reading grade-level texts fluently, additional measures should be administered as part of their regular triannual screening. These would include phonological awareness and phonics measures including correspondence between sounds and letters and decoding ability. Free phonological awareness assessments are available online, including the Heggerty PASA and the Kilpatrick PAST. Free phonics measures are available online, including the Quick Phonics Screener.	

While screeners with a high classification accuracy—that is, those that correctly identify the students in need of support while not incorrectly identifying students who do not need intervention—can predict risk, it is important to not base decisions on only one assessment (Catts & Hogan, 2021). It is also important to keep in mind that screeners are most predictive when the core classroom instruction is strong. In other words, if many or most students are reading below grade level, not only will a screener's utility be compromised, but also it is then necessary to reevaluate the core curriculum and instruction.

When creating a plan for administering screeners, there should also be a plan for how to respond to the data. It may be necessary to set aside time to review the results, make data-based decisions and determine intervention groups. Staff who are providing the intervention should be well-versed in evidence-based strategies and interventions. For more information, see:

- Evidence-Based Practices
- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support
- Assessment and Progress Monitoring

Photo by Allison Shelley/The Verbatim Agency for EDUimages

INTRODUCTION

Two foundational skills are required for reading: word recognition and language comprehension as referenced in the Simple View of Reading (SVR). Both are essential for reading, and one cannot compensate for the other. For more information on SVR, see the Introduction to Literacy Instruction.

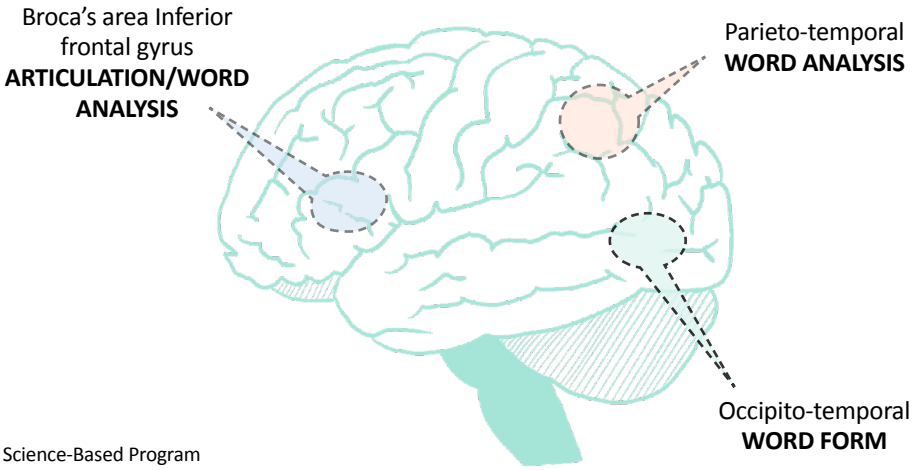
Overwhelmingly, the most common cause of reading difficulty is word identification, or decoding (Barquero et al., 2014; Shaywitz, 2003). Some estimate that more than 90 percent of reading difficulties in grade K-2, and the majority of reading difficulties in other grades, are caused by difficulties with word recognition. As with all difficulties, word recognition difficulties exist on a continuum. A pronounced, diagnosed difficulty with word recognition is dyslexia. A student could present with mild, moderate, or severe effects of dyslexia.

WHAT IS 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." This definition was crafted with the input of leading researchers and scientists by International Dyslexia Association in 2002.

BRAIN SYSTEMS FOR READING

Brain imaging has shown three areas are involved in reading. Broca's area is active when you vocalize words in your mind. The middle "temporal-parietal" area decodes the sounds of letters and words, and is much less active in people with dyslexia; the rearmost area contians the memories of whole words. The better someone reads, the more active it becomes.



Source: Overcoming Dyslexiaa: A New and Complete Science-Based Program for Reading Problems at Any Level by Sally Shaywitz

Looking Deeper at Terms:

- **Neurobiological:** Dyslexia is a brain-based disability. It is not related to environment, speech, or vision. Additionally, it should be noted that family history of dyslexia is correlated (Dehaene, 2009). There is a higher prevalence of dyslexia among children of those who have dyslexia, though there is not a direct gene correlation or causation (Dehaene, 2009). Dyslexia exists in all languages, and can be diagnosed no matter a student's first language.
- **Accurate and/or fluent word recognition:** While the primary source of reading difficulty is a deficit in the phonological component of language (explained below), the student presents with inaccurate or dysfluent reading (Catts & Hogan, 2021).
- **Deficit in the phonological component of language:** Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) studies have revealed that students with dyslexia have a "deficit in the processing of phonemes – the elementary constituents of spoken words." An area in the left hemisphere involved with the processing of phonemes, or speech sounds, is not sufficiently active during reading (Barquero et al., 2014; Eckhart, 2018; Shaywitz, 2003). This is a neurobiological marker, not caused by environment or prior teaching.
- **Unexpected:** Students with dyslexia are able to perform at expected or above-expected levels on other educational assessments; most notably, language comprehension may be a relative strength. While some educational assessments (i.e., passage comprehension or spelling) may be affected by their causational reading disability, the weakness in reading is unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities (Dehaene, 2009; Shaywitz, 2003).
- **Cognitive abilities:** Cognitive abilities include planning, memory, visual perception, and more (Morin, 2021).

Scientists and researchers vary on the prevalence of dyslexia, perhaps because dyslexia exists on a continuum. Students could present with very mild, moderate, or severe effects of the disability. However, the most commonly agreed-upon range suggests that 10 percent of all students have dyslexia (Siegel, 2006). It is important to note that the majority of students who have a Specific Learning Disability have a Specific Language or Reading Disability, commonly known as dyslexia (EDFacts, 2021).

DYSLEXIA BEHAVIORS EXAMPLE: GRADE 2 STUDENT		
MILD	**MODERATE**	**SEVERE**
• Uses, but confuses, letter-sound correspondences (i.e., reading /k/ for "ch," or spelling /j/ with a "g") • Able to segment and blend one-syllable words, but may make errors • Difficulty transitioning between syllable types (i.e., reading a short vowel in a long vowel syllable) • Difficulty with multisyllabic word analysis (i.e., does not exhibit word attack skills to break apart multisyllabic words) • Slow or laborious decoding	Behaviors of Mild Dyslexia plus: • Persistent confusion with more elementary letter-sound correspondences, especially vowels (i.e., reading /e/ for "a," or /m/ for "p") • Comprehension of texts read aloud may be affected; student must re-read to understand what they are reading	Behaviors of Mild Dyslexia plus: • Reading significantly below grade level prior to intervention, or would be reading significantly below grade level without intervention • Comprehension of texts read aloud is severely affected; student cannot comprehend what they are reading due to their lack of decoding automaticity

RED FLAGS/SCREENING PROTOCOL

Dyslexia is neurobiological and exists upon a continuum of severity. Thus, dyslexia is typically identified when a student – prior to, upon, or after the onset of formal reading education – presents with specific academic behaviors. Below are behaviors that *may* indicate a student has a deficit in the phonological component of language:

Before the onset of formal reading education (Pre-K 3/4):

- Difficulty with developmentally appropriate rhyming tasks
- Difficulty recognizing distinct sounds within spoken words
- Difficulty producing the speech sounds of the language of instruction (i.e., English, or Spanish and English in a bilingual school)

During early reading education (K-2):

- Difficulty with developmentally appropriate phonemic awareness tasks (i.e., blending speech sounds into words, or segmenting words in individual speech sounds)
- Difficulty recalling all the letter names
- Difficulty recalling letter-sound correspondences (i.e., difficulty recalling that "m" makes the /m/ sound and then the /e/ sound is represented by "e.")
- Difficulty blending three to four sounds together while reading
- Difficulty reading three- to five-letter words
- Lack of automaticity while reading
- Slow or labored reading

After early reading education (Grades 3+):

- Difficulty reading words
- Lack of automaticity while reading
- Slow or labored reading
- Difficulty spelling

For more guidance and information, see the Assessments and Progress Monitoring.

All students should be screened beginning in pre-K 4 at a cadence of three times a year using a validated screener. The screener should be brief, comprehensive, done early, be inclusive of language and dialect diversity, and be aware of neurobiology and genetics. For additional information on screeners, see the reading difficulties section. The table below describes the screening measures needed to adequately determine a student's risk for later reading difficulty and dyslexia:

INTERVENTION BEST PRACTICES

Structured Literacy is a set of principles for how to teach reading that can be used in Tier 1, 2 and 3. Structured literacy is the best practice for students with any reading difficulty, including dyslexia, and is systematic and cumulative, direct and explicit, diagnostic, multisensory, and analytic. The Structured Literacy approach is aligned to Literacy Guiding Principles 2 and 3.

For more information, see:

- K-5 Literacy Instruction
- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

PRINCIPLES OF STRUCTURED LITERACY	CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION GREEN FLAG	CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION RED FLAG
Teachers should follow a scope and sequence that introduces new concepts and reviews previously learned concepts.	Each sound, letter and phonics concept taught in a logical manner. Concepts reviewed daily	Concepts are taught in a random (i.e., letter of the week), unclear, or alphabetical order.
Direct and Explicit: Teachers should state clearly and directly the decoding and literacy concepts the student should learn.	Clear, descriptive language about how each sound is made and each letter is formed. Teachers can refer to the curriculum to learn about the English language.	Encourages students to guess sounds and letters. Encourages students to use context, sentence patterns, or pictures to guess words.
Diagnostic: Teachers should adapt lessons in the moment and make diagnostic decisions about student learning between lessons.	Embedded progress monitoring Allows for more or less review based on student response to instruction. Manageable way to adapt lessons to Tier 2 and 3	Moves along in scope and sequence without progress monitoring. Lack of flexibility to review Overly scripted components
Multisensory: Teachers should draw attention to the visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile routes to learning.	Encourages students to connect the oral aspects of language (speech) to the visual aspects of language (print)?	Excessive use of flashcards, worksheets and drills.
Analytic: Teachers should encourage students to analyze the English language to build word-attack skills.	Include information about vowels, syllable types, and strategies for decoding multisyllabic words Encourages students to notice and analyze word patterns, including morphological patterns. Encourages students to decode even high-frequency words and analyze their decodable parts.	Lack of explicit instruction on vowels, syllable types, and strategies for decoding multisyllabic words. Lack of morpheme instruction Discourages students for recognizing word patterns

Structured Literacy includes five key components of instruction for students with dyslexia:

- **Phonemic awareness:** Because dyslexia typically results from a deficit in the phonological component of language, it is imperative that students with dyslexia receive intervention in the phonological component of language. That is, systematic intervention aimed at improving phonemic awareness.

A DEEPER LOOK AT PHONEMIC AWARENESS INSTRUCTION:

Work with phonemes within a word!

Teacher: "Are we ready for some sound work? First up: first sounds! What's the first sound we hear in...mat?"

Students: "/m/"
[repeat for... sat? fat? rat?]

Teacher: "Nice work, students!"

Teacher: "Let's try the same for the final sound in words! What's the last sound you hear in... ram?"

Students: "/m/"
[repeat for... luck, rid, tip]

Teacher: "My students rock! Let's try something a bit harder: Can you break up the sounds in this word: bit?"

Students: "/b/.../i/.../t/!"

Teacher: "Let's do a harder one with more sounds... bliss?"

Students: "/b/.../l/.../i/.../s/"

Teacher: "Nice work! What about...brick?"

Students: "/b/.../r/.../i/.../k/."

Phonemic awareness instruction often gets confused with phonological sensitivity (Brady, 2020). Phonological sensitivity is simply sensitivity to larger units of speech such as syllables and rhymes. Often, children acquire this before phonemic awareness. However, it neither a precursor to nor a requisite for the more advanced skill of phonemic awareness. Phonemic awareness is the "conscious awareness of individual speech sounds (phonemes)" (Brady, 2020) and is essential for learning to read. Many teachers and curriculum spend an unnecessary amount of time teaching rhyming and syllable clapping, but these skills are not essential to later reading ability. Teachers should devote their time starting in late Pre-Kindergarten to phoneme awareness. Examples include phoneme identification, blending, segmenting, deletion, addition, and substitution.

- **Sound/symbol relationships, or phonics:** In addition to phonemic proficiency, students need intervention in the relationship between phonemes (speech sounds) and graphemes (the letters and letter sounds that represent speech sounds). Teachers must teach students the letter-sound relationships, working with a few phonemes at a time. After each short vowel and single consonant gave been learned, researchers recommend introducing increasingly complex patterns like consonant blends, digraphs and eventually all of the syllable types. Phonics instruction cannot end at introduction of individual phoneme/grapheme instruction. Teachers must use word-building activities to teach students to blend the sounds together for fluent reading (Foorman et al., 2016).
- **Fluency:** Fluency, or the ability to read with expression, accuracy and smoothness, is an essential bridge to comprehension. Teachers should create experiences for children to read orally, learn to self-monitor and receive feedback (Foorman et al., 2016).
- **Vocabulary:** Vocabulary, which is primarily a language comprehension skill, is an essential skill for students to attain full literacy. Vocabulary not only includes word knowledge, but the full range of semantics: connotations, word relationships, morphology, shades of meaning, synonyms, antonyms, multiple meanings and more. Students can receive direct instruction in Vocabulary through study of word relationships and morphology. Vocabulary instruction can be done orally and then integrated into text-based tasks as the child's decoding develops.
- **Comprehension:** Comprehension, the ultimate goal of reading, can be explicitly taught as well. Students can and should be taught that reading should make sense. As per the K-5 Literacy Instruction section, comprehension is achieved when one is able to accurately read a text and use their background knowledge to construct meaning.

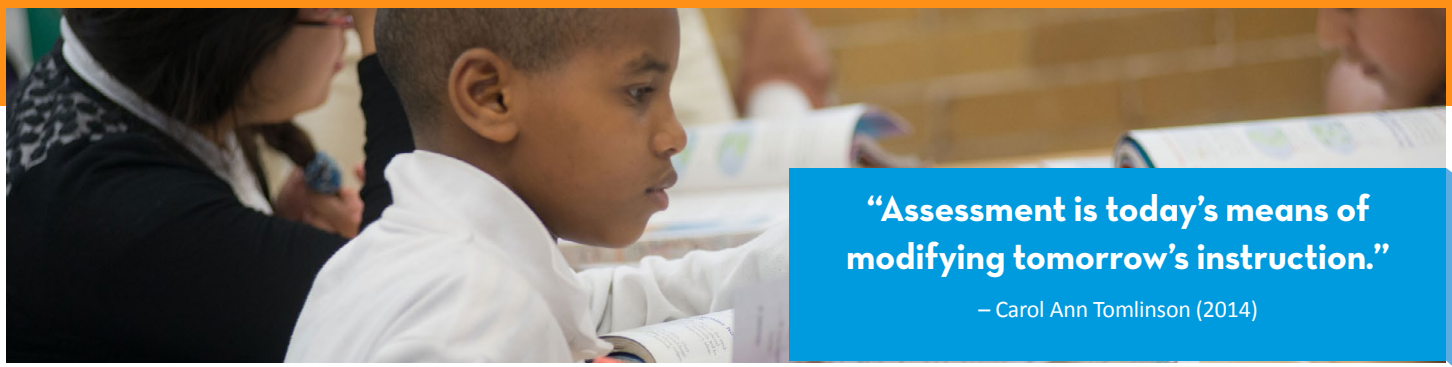
Comprehensive intervention for students with dyslexia would include all five components: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Teachers must assess the components of each intervention based on the components present. Teachers can reference this Curriculum Evaluation Tool for more in-depth information.

Misconceptions:

Unfortunately, dyslexia is commonly misunderstood. The section below covers the six of the most persistent misconceptions about dyslexia.

MISCONCEPTION	TRUTH
Classroom teachers cannot meet the needs of students with dyslexia. **FALSE!**	High-quality Tier 1 instruction – provided by classroom teachers – is essential to ensuring students' needs are met. Reading difficulties exist on a continuum, and Tier 1 instruction can strengthen the foundational skills all students need to read (Nelson-Walker, et al., 2013). Code-focused instruction involving phonemic awareness, phonics and fluency are highly effective in addressing any code-based difficulties (Catts & Hogan, 2021). Dyslexia is neurobiological in nature; thus, Tier 1 instruction cannot prevent the brain-based elements of dyslexia; rather, Tier 1 instruction may prevent the severe reading problems characteristic of the disorder. Classroom teachers should also screen students for dyslexia and then provide targeted, effective Tier 2 and 3 instruction in small groups, as is common in elementary literacy blocks. (Gersten, et al., 2008; see also Scanlon, et al., 2008 and Wanzek, et al. 2016)
Students with dyslexia see letters and words backwards. **FALSE!**	Letter reversal is common in many young students as they learn to read and write (Vaughn & Fletcher, 2020). At one time, letter reversal was thought to be a main characteristic of dyslexia, but research suggests that there is no evidence that students with dyslexia reverse their letters more often compared to students without dyslexia (Gaab, 2021). According to Blackborne et al. (2014), one hypothesis for the frequency of letter reversal in young students is that learning to read requires an adaptation of an object recognition process in the brain. This process was not built to adhere to left-right orientation. For example, a chair can be recognized as a chair if it is facing left, right, or is upside down. When it comes to reading and writing letters, a specific left-right orientation is necessary for accurate identification (e.g., b vs. d, or p vs. q). If learning to read and write requires an adaptation of an object recognition process in the brain, then all students (not just students with dyslexia) require time and practice reading and writing letters with a left-right orientation (Blackburne, et al., 2014).
Students benefit from waiting until after second grade to provide reading intervention. **FALSE!**	Intensive interventions are most effective in kindergarten or first grade (Wanzek & Vaughn, 2007). Deficits in phonological awareness have been shown to be robust precursors of dyslexia in students as young as age 3 (Puolakanaho et al., 2007). The brain's ability to change (brain plasticity) decreases throughout the childhood years (Johnson, 2001; Johnston, 2009) and certain skills are harder to acquire after a "sensitive period" (Johnson, 2005). Thus, it is imperative to intervene in a timely manner upon onset of reading difficulty.
Home-based literacy interactions (i.e., "reading with your child every night" and "read-alouds") will improve the performance for children at risk as for dyslexia. **FALSE!**	While the home literacy environment (HLE) is important for improving vocabulary and background knowledge, there is no research-based evidence that it may remediate dyslexia or the phonological deficit, dyslexia's root cause (Hamilton, 2016). The genetic predisposition to dyslexia decreases the efficacy of HLE that is shown with non-dyslexic populations (Powers, 2016). HLE may boost auditory comprehension ability in children during early reading development, but no significant findings show improvement in brain activity at the later stages of reading (Powers, 2016).
Colored overlays improve dyslexia. **FALSE!**	Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome, more commonly known as Irlen's Syndrome, advocates the use of colored overlays to remediate difficulties in reading rate, accuracy and comprehension for students with dyslexia (Freeze, 2016). While colored overlays are frequently used as an accommodation in many states, there is no research-based evidence that supports their use (Uccula, 2014). In various recent studies not connected with the Irlen Institute, there was no increase in words correct per minute (WCPM) read by subjects using colored overlays (Freeze, 2016).
Dyslexia only occurs in English-speaking students and English learners students cannot be diagnosed with dyslexia. **FALSE!**	There is significant evidence that dyslexia exists in all languages, including those with a less complex writing system than English. For example, Spanish is considered a more transparent writing system. Learning to read can be predicted or at the very least influenced by neurobiological factors such as phonological awareness before the onset of formal schooling; accordingly, dyslexia can exist in students from all language backgrounds (Hoeft, McCardle, and Pugh, 2015). Additionally, students whose first language is not English and are learning English in school should not be overlooked for dyslexia red flags. In fact, their phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondences and decoding automaticity can be assessed in their first language to determine if they are exhibiting any of the red-flag behaviors for dyslexia.

SECTION 6: COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT AND PROGRESS MONITORING



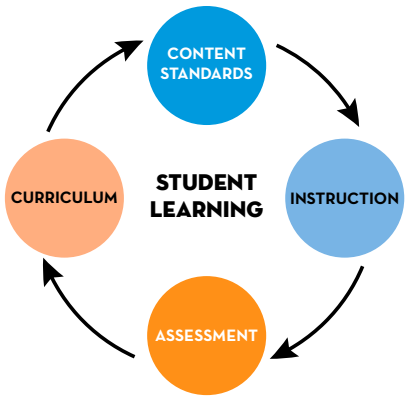
> **"Assessment is today's means of modifying tomorrow's instruction."**
>
> – Carol Ann Tomlinson (2014)

A comprehensive system of literacy assessments allows educators to better understand where students are with respect to the English language arts CCSS. Data gathered from high-quality literacy assessments help educators determine students' entry points as well as whether they have met goals, achieved growth and/or need support in specific areas. In this way, assessments are essential educational tools that help answer the question, "Did students learn what was taught?," thus bridging instructional intent with its impact on student learning. Utilizing data on student performance to inform instruction is an essential component of high-quality reading instruction (United States Department of Education, 2017). These critical data points help schools implement effective interventions, supports, and enrichment opportunities that improve student literacy outcomes and align to Literacy Guiding Principle 2.

ASSESSMENT PURPOSES

- *Promote Student Achievement by Informing Instruction:* Analyzing assessment data allows educators to understand students' strengths and needs in order to adjust instruction and inform policy making decisions. The goals of assessment can be broken down in two ways: assessment for learning and assessment of learning.
  - Assessments for learning are used as a part of an ongoing instructional cycle to promote student achievement through a data-driven pedagogical approach.
  - Assessments of learning provide a tool for evaluating the effectiveness of instruction.
- *Understand Opportunity Gaps:* Data gathered from assessments can be disaggregated to understand differences in educational outcomes for subgroups of students. This information is essential in informing equitable instructional practices and policy decisions.
- *Ensure Accountability:* Data gathered from assessment shine a light on student performance. Assessment results are reported to stakeholders and the broader community to increase transparency and ensure educational institutions are supporting positive student outcomes.
- *Evaluate Programming:* Assessments provide information used to determine the success of programs (e.g., curricula, instructional practices, etc.) and inform improvements needed to ensure those programs meet their intended goals.

Figure 1. Assessment as part of a learning system (Center for Assessment, 2020).

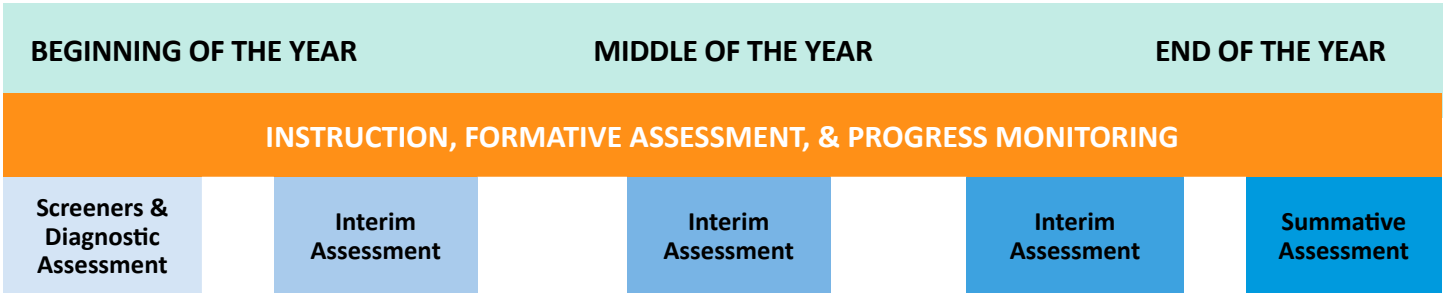


Assessment is one part of a larger learning system and is aligned to content standards, instructional practices and curricula.

Building A Comprehensive Assessment System for Literacy

Building a comprehensive literacy assessment system (Literacy, Guiding Principle 2) starts with identifying the purposes for assessing students. Ideally, there would be a balance of assessments *for* learning and assessments *of* learning. A strong assessment system will have a combination of formative tools that drive instruction and summative tools that provide valid, reliable and comparable measures of performance and growth. LEAs may want to consider Achieve's Student Assessment Inventory, the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) reading assessment database, or another resource to take stock of their assessment use and strategy.

While gathering data through a system of assessments is a critical part of the authentic instructional cycle, it is important to note that no single assessment serves all purposes - including screening, diagnosing, setting benchmarks, monitoring progress and providing a comparable measure of achievement. Strong comprehensive literacy plans (CLPs) gather data from a variety of assessment sources in order to take an intentional and systematic approach to meeting the needs of all learners. Strong instruction and aligned assessments ensure that schools support all students, including but not limited to students with disabilities, English learners, English learners with disabilities, students who experience opportunity gaps, students who face socioeconomic inequities, and students who may benefit from additional strategic academic support. Only when educators have data to see and understand differences in instructional outcomes can schools work to close opportunity gaps and create more equitable learning experiences for all students. Below is a sample assessment timeline and details on different assessment types to consider when building a comprehensive assessment system.



ASSESSMENT TYPES

- **Diagnostic Assessment:** Diagnostic assessments are administered at the beginning of a course, grade, semester, or unit to get a baseline of student performance. While often administered at the beginning of instruction, diagnostic assessments may be administered multiple times in order to determine students' academic strengths and needs. Diagnostic assessment can be classroom created (e.g., teacher and/or school curated rubrics, checklists), provided by curricula, and/or used at the district level.

- **Screeners:** Screeners are brief assessments used over a year to help determine students' needs and plan for additional academic support in specific areas (e.g., English proficiency or learning differences). Screeners can support students' literacy development by alerting educators of students who need additional instructional support. The National Center on Intensive Intervention has an Academic Screening Tools Chart that schools can explore for screener assessment examples.

- **Formative Assessment:** Formative assessments are used by educators as a part of the instructional cycle to improve teaching and learning. These assessments are used frequently (daily, weekly) during regular classroom instruction to measure students' progress and achievement of intended instructional outcomes. The data collected from formative assessments support intentional instructional decision-making such as adjusting groupings, instructional delivery methods, the scope and sequence, and other instructional decisions that promote learning. Formative assessments are often designed by teachers, districts/networks, and/or curriculum writers. Formative assessments also provide educators with the opportunity to test knowledge and skills that are difficult to assess using other assessment types (e.g., speaking and listening, research projects, authentic writing, etc.).

- **Progress Monitoring:** Progress monitoring is a specific type of formative assessment in that it is used to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and give insight into student performance. Often, the term "progress monitoring" is used when a teacher is providing specific instructional interventions to support individual students to track their progress in focus areas. This is a key component of a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS), which is a preventative, data-driven, continuum of evidence-based practices designed to meet the academic, behavioral and social emotional needs of all students. Decision-making regarding instruction and intervention tiers is made based on data obtained through universal screening and regular progress monitoring.

- **Interim or Benchmark Assessment:** Interim or benchmark assessments are administered periodically (three to nine times per academic year) throughout a course or grade to measure student achievement and growth related to a specific set of goals or standards. Interim or benchmark assessments may be aligned to or predictive of summative assessments. Interim or benchmark assessments can be used by educators to inform instructional decisions (e.g., reteach specific knowledge/skills, identify students in need of additional support) and by schools/districts/networks to track progress toward goals on summative assessments.

- **Summative Assessment:** Summative assessments are administered near the end of the academic year to determine overall achievement and growth for a course or grade. These assessments measure students' performance against the standards and a set of learning targets for that period. Summative assessments inform educator and policy-maker decisions at the classroom, school, district and state levels because they provide a standardized set of data to make comparisons across groups and over time. They also provide students, caregivers and other stakeholders an overview of yearly performance.

- **Multilingual Program Assessments:** Formative and summative assessments are key components of dual language programs delivering instruction to English learners and emergent bilingual students. Research-based practices recommend assessing literacy skills in both languages of instruction to better understand students' trajectories toward biliteracy. The coexistence of two or more languages in children cannot be measured or understood as independently constrained by each language. Highly effective dual language programs use summative and formative assessments in two languages (e.g., English and Spanish), as evidence of success in bilingual and biliteracy programming. The assessments of multilingual competence promote the use of multilingual practices such as language choice, translanguaging, code switching and code mixing. For more guidance and information, see the Multilingual and English Learner section of the CLP.

THE DISTRICT'S SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The District of Columbia administers annual statewide summative assessments of English language arts and literacy in grades 3-8 and high school. Since the 2014-15 school year, the District has administered the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments and the Multi-State Alternate Assessments (MSAA) for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. These assessments are designed to provide a valid, reliable and comparable measure of student performance and growth on the reading and literacy CCSS. This assessment currently provides the *only* way to look at student academic performance across schools, LEAs, the state and different groups of students. While the primary purpose of these assessments is to inform programmatic change and policy decisions, student results should also be used in concert with formative tools to support school- and LEA-based decisions.

The District also requires an annual assessment of English language proficiency for English learners in grades K-12. These assessments are the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 and Alternate ACCESS for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. These assessments are designed to measure the WIDA English Language Development Standards across four different domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and are used to set the District's exit criteria for English learners. Additional information on the District's summative assessments can be found on OSSE's State Assessments website.

Using Assessment Data: Cycle of Improvement

Using assessment data to drive positive learning outcomes is a cyclical part of instructional design that allows teachers and school leaders to be intentional and equitable in their literacy practices. Educators and policy makers at all levels must develop their assessment literacy skills and ensure that a robust set of data is collected to fully understand student performance. An overview of these best practices is outlined below. To learn more about assessment literacy, schools may consider engaging in the Center for Assessment's Classroom Assessment Learning Modules (2020) for teachers as well as school, network, or district leaders.

Cyclical Design Process

- Plan: Whether planning for a year, unit, or lesson, it is important that practitioners consider the sources of data they will draw upon to measure learning outcomes. Draw inferences from the assessment data collected and use those inferences to make decisions to plan future instruction.
- Implement: Throughout instruction, implement assessments that align to learning.
- Collect & Analyze: After instruction, take time to collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative assessment data whether from formative, interim, or summative assessments. Use these data to take instructional actions that drive positive learning outcomes for students.

Recommendations provided by the US Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences (2009) on how to use data to support instructional decision making include:

1	2	3	4	5
Make data collection and analysis part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement	Teach students to examine their own data and set learning goals	Teach students to examine their own data and set learning goals	Provide supports that foster a data-driven culture within the school	Develop and maintain a districtwide data system

DATA DRIVEN INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES	
Educator Data Driven Instructional Practices	• strategically adjusting instructional time (e.g., planning more time to address student needs, inform scheduling, etc.) • identifying individual students or small groups of students who need targeted support • revising the scope and sequence to prioritize standards, knowledge, and/or skills • evaluating the effectiveness of lessons and/or curricula used • tailoring instructional methods based on its effectiveness • reflecting on student-, class-, school-, and system-level strengths and needs • connecting students with supports and services they may need • improving vertical integration of curricula across grade levels • providing timely, appropriately formatted/accessible, specific and constructive feedback • informing families and caregivers of students' progress

Grade, School, LEA, District, or State Data Meeting Practices	• tracking progress toward goals at the classroom, grade, district, or state level
	• setting a vision for student mastery/generating assessment exemplars
	• training staff on how data can be used to adjust instruction during lessons, inform planning practices, create strategic student groups, adjust instructional time, etc.
	• providing staff support with collecting and interpreting data collected (e.g., data reports)
	• connecting staff with resources to support students who have not yet mastered content
	• intentionally planning data meeting times, frequencies and topics through
	  • Preparation. Prior to these meetings, educators should set an agenda that focuses on using the most updated data relative to a specific, timely topic. It is too overwhelming to attempt to address all student achievement concerns at once; targeted discussions are key to successful data meetings.
	  • Analysis. During these meetings, teachers should follow the cycle of inquiry, using data to state hypotheses about their teaching and learning practices and then testing those hypotheses.
	  • Action agenda. At the end of each meeting, educators should be prepared to enact a data-based action plan that examines and modifies their instruction to increase student achievement in the area of focus for the meeting.

Data Driven Instructional Practices (United States Department of Education, 2009)

ASSESSMENT QUALITY & EQUITY

When designing and evaluating assessments used as a part of a comprehensive literacy plan (CLP), it is important to consider the quality of those assessments. Assessments should be designed to be accessible to all students and with Universal Design for Assessment Principles (National Center on Educational Outcomes, 2016) in mind. Considerations for evaluating assessment quality found in the Appendix H are adapted from the Center for Assessment's (2020) report. Assessments at all levels (e.g., formative, interim, etc.) should align to these key aspects of assessment quality.

Adhering to these aspects of assessment quality not only leads to effective assessment, but also helps ensure that assessments are equitable. Equitable assessments are accessible, fair, have accurate measurements, and lead to valid interpretations. When designing or evaluating assessments, schools must consider the language, abilities and backgrounds of students. For assessments to be equitable for all students, accessibility features and accommodations must be available to students who need them and the test must reflect students' lived experiences.

Assessments provide an objective tool for understanding the current state of learning so that educators can support learners and promote literacy. A CLP includes a system of balanced assessments where data collected from a variety of assessment types is used intentionally to drive instruction. By creating a comprehensive system of literacy assessment, schools ensure that educators are equipped with the tools and systems that can drive positive literacy outcomes as outlined in Literacy Guiding Principles 1 and 2.

For more information on Assessment and Progress Monitoring, see:

- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Literacy
- Multilingual and English Learners
- Professional Learning and Educator Development
- The Assessment and Progress Monitoring Appendix H

SECTION 7: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT

ESSA DEFINITION AND IMPLICATIONS

When the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed by President Barack Obama in 2015, it provided a new federal definition of professional learning. Through ESSA, an update to 2002's No Child Left Behind (NCLB), President Obama worked with families, educators and other stakeholders to create a law (ESSA) that readied all students for success in college and career opportunities. One of the highlights of ESSA is that it, "Requires—for the first time—that all students in America be taught to high academic standards that will prepare them to succeed in college and careers" (US Department of Education, 2017). Standards-aligned instruction that prepares students for college and career also requires continued and more robust teacher development and support. The important concepts below, highlighted in ESSA's definition, signal important implications for the design and structure of professional learning plans in public schools in the District of Columbia. There are a few important distinctions between professional learning under ESSA and the former NCLB.

1. Professional Learning (PL) is for all educators – principals, school leaders, teachers, support personnel, paraprofessionals and early childhood educators. Active participation in PL will glean skills to improve practice and increase student achievement. PL should be provided to explicitly support teachers in providing students succeed in a well-rounded education and to meet state academic standards.
2. Professional Learning (PL) needs to be "sustained, intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven and classroom-focused." This language shifts away from ineffective forms of PL that had been prevalent in previous years, some of which include stand-alone, one-day, or short-term workshops.
3. Professional Learning (PL) should be part of (included in) school and district improvement plans; that it provides educators training in the effective use of technology; that it be evaluated for its impact on teacher effectiveness and student achievement; and that it be personalized "to address the educator's specific needs."
4. ESSA requires the use of evidence-based interventions and activities. PL programs and activities must have demonstrated a record of success, which includes reliable, trustworthy and valid evidence to suggest the program is effective. This is a more flexible and context-informed approach to applying research to practice than the "scientifically based research" standard under NCLB.

With these shifts in how PL is designed and the elements of effective learning LEAs, district and school leaders have implications to consider when designing and delivering PL. Questions to consider and plan for these implications include:

- How will PL affect the master schedule? Will teachers have opportunities to plan together? Will teachers have opportunities to review student work and data together? Are there dedicated times in the schedule for PL?
- What does the learning experience look like for a new teacher? An experienced teacher? Are there opportunities for teachers to mentor one another?
- Does PL include opportunities for practice, feedback and reflection?
- Is there adequate funding in the budget to support PL opportunities? (personnel, speakers, conferences, resources, etc.)

This guidance aligns to Guiding Principle 4.

A PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FRAMEWORK

In order to begin preparing for rich professional learning (PL) experiences an LEA, school or community organization may consider a framework to support the beginning stages. A framework will guide you in information gathering, identifying key stakeholders, goal setting and provide guidance to support the plan development. Below is an example of a 7-stage process to develop a new or revisit an existing professional learning plan.

Stage one: Organize for Effectiveness
Stage two: Develop Partnerships
Stage three: Needs Assessment
Stage four: Create a Literacy Plan
Stage five: Curriculum Review
Stage six: Implementation of professional learning activities
Stage seven: Progress Monitoring and Adjustments

For more details related to the Professional Learning Framework, see **Appendix I**

CHARACTERISTICS OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

In addition to adopting a framework, LEA's, schools and community based organizations The definition of professional development mapped out in ESSA outlines six criteria for high-quality PL.

- **Sustained** – taking place over an extended period; longer than one day or a one-time workshop.
- **Intensive** – focused on a discrete concept, practice or program.
- **Collaborative** – involving multiple educators, educators and coaches, or a set of participants grappling with the same concept or practice and in which participants work together to achieve shared understanding.
- **Job-embedded** – A part of the on-going, regular work of instruction and related to teaching and learning taking place in real time in the teaching and learning environment.
- **Data-driven** – based upon and responsive to real-time information about the needs of participants and their students.
- **Classroom-focused** – related to the practices taking place during the teaching process and relevant to the instructional process.

STANDARDS FOR THE PREPARATION OF LITERACY PROFESSIONALS

The following section explores teacher PL and its impact on instructional practice and literacy outcomes. The term "professional learning" encompasses building teachers' knowledge of the evidence-based foundations of literacy and language, teaching and refining classroom pedagogy, assessment and evaluation, and on-going collaboration among educators. Effective PL results in teachers who deepen their knowledge base and demonstrate sustainable and positive changes in their competencies, leading to improved student outcomes.

The Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals (2017) provide a framework for literacy PL, refinement and assessment. They include foundational knowledge, curriculum and instruction, assessment and evaluation, diversity and equity, learners and the literacy environment, PL and leadership, and practicum/clinical experiences. The standards aim for candidates to demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical, historical and evidence-based foundations of literacy and language and the ways in which they interrelate and the role of literacy professionals in schools.

Foundational literacy knowledge includes knowledge of the theories, content and instructional practices supported by scientific research, and is an essential part of literacy teachers' preparation and ongoing professional development. Over the past few decades, a growing body of scientific research has led to a consensus on how students learn to read and the most effective ways to teach them. Recent brain-imaging studies have confirmed well-established conceptual models explaining how human brains become wired to read print. Meanwhile, achievement data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress for the past 10 years demonstrates that only about a third of fourth and eighth graders read at proficient levels.

Studies show, however, that *teachers* are the key to improving literacy outcomes for students - effective teaching can prevent or reduce reading failure in all but a small percentage of students. If national reading outcomes are to change, teachers must be equipped with the foundational knowledge of the theoretical, historical and evidence-based foundations of literacy and language.

Research on the impact of teacher knowledge on student performance reveals that specialized knowledge is "a key element of teacher quality" (Piasta, 2009). While there is little disagreement among educators that the teaching of reading is complex, teachers' knowledge base and the curricula and methods in use across classrooms vary widely. As Dr. Louisa Moats, literacy researcher and expert, reminds us, "teaching reading is rocket science. But it is also established science, with clear, specific, practical instructional strategies that all teachers should be taught and supported in using." The International Literacy Association and National Council of Teachers of English identifies teacher knowledge as a critical quality indicator of teacher preparation and performance. Teachers must possess a depth and breadth of knowledge, including a conceptual understanding of subject matter content and pedagogical knowledge, literacy learning, language development and theories of teaching and learning within social contexts, focusing on diverse learners.

Literacy teachers must also be prepared to develop, implement and differentiate evidence-based curricula to meet the needs of all learners. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) describes "evidence-based interventions" as practices or programs that have evidence to show that they are effective at producing results and improving outcomes when implemented. The term "evidence-based" ensures that curricula, programs and interventions have proven to be effective by leading to improved student achievement.

A primary goal of PL is to equip teachers with the foundational knowledge necessary to implement literacy curricula with fidelity, differentiate instruction for all learners, and evaluate whether or not the curricular methods and resources are aligned to evidence-based practices.

Literacy professionals should be prepared to administer and use the results of multiple assessment tools to evaluate literacy instruction at the individual, classroom, school and district levels. PL should focus on building teachers' knowledge and skills of how to systematically use assessment data to plan and differentiate instruction and to respond to student progress. Literacy professionals need to understand and facilitate the analysis of multiple data sources including formal and informal assessment measures, formative and summative assessments, diagnostics, benchmark assessments and student work samples to inform and enhance instructional decisions.

ADULT LEARNING THEORY

Educators can benefit from PL activities that address adult learning principles. These principles, referred to as andragogy (Knowles et al., 2015), include the use of personalized, experiential and interactive approaches that allow experience of the learner to serve as a scaffold upon which new learning is built. Pedagogy refers to the learning experience of children and adolescents. Andragogy refers to the learning experiences of adults. The chart below outlines those distinct differences.

PEDAGOGY VS ANDRAGOGY

	PEDAGOGY	ANDRAGOGY
The Need to Know	Learners must learn what the teacher knows to be successful	Learners must know why they need to know something
The Learners Self Concept	Learners are dependent	Learners are responsible for their own decisions
The Role of Experience	Learners are reliant on the experience of the teacher	The experience of learners is a resource for the teacher
Readiness to Learn	Learners become ready to learn when the teacher tells them they need to be ready	Learners become ready to learn so they can cope with real life
Orientation to Learning	Subject centered	Task or problem centered
Motivation	Externally motivated (grades, approval, pressure, etc.)	Mostly internally motivated with some external motivators

The Andragogic Process Model.

1. Prepare the learner how to learn
2. Establish a climate conducive to learning
3. Create a mechanism for mutual planning
4. Diagnose the needs for learning
5. Formulate program objectives/content to meet the needs
6. Design a pattern of learning experiences
7. Conduct learning experiences with suitable techniques and materials
8. Evaluate the learning outcomes and diagnose learn

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

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Ongoing PL for educators in reading should regularly and thoroughly attend to equipping educators with the knowledge and skill to provide equitable opportunities for reading instruction to all students. PL should include opportunities for educators to understand opportunities and barriers to access of reading instruction and also understand assessment bias, reading disabilities, dialectical differences and how to select texts that support reading development that avoid bias in terms of representation or perspective. PL that provides educators with opportunities to engage in knowledge of diversity, equity and inclusion as it relates to both the provision and content of instructional practices should be an ongoing area of focus. Educators should engage in diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) activities as outlined in Guiding Principle 1, such as investigations of:

- Equity literacy;
- Appreciating dialectical differences;
- Developing relationships and disrupting bias in texts;
- Dyslexia and other reading/language disabilities; and
- Engaging in reading instruction that is culturally, linguistically and historically responsive.

Further, school leaders should carefully consider who is involved in ongoing PL in reading instruction. In order to support a comprehensive approach to literacy development, all educators should be encouraged to participate in PL. Instructional aides, general and special educators, and school leaders should participate in PL and collaboration around the provision of literacy instruction. The responsibility and opportunity for student growth in literacy does not exist in the curriculum or in a particular instructional approach. Rather, the investment in educators is vital. Educators who can engage in ongoing assessment, instruction and planning to support readers' growth and development are key to improving literacy outcomes of all learners. PL should include ongoing and engaging interaction with content and perspectives on how children learn to read, including a sustaining opportunities to practice and model instructional approaches, in-session coaching, collaborative planning and ongoing communities of practice in which educators can share results and refine approaches. Long-term, school-based, embedded PL that addresses school priorities will lead to the greatest improvement over time.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP

Educators' engagement in ongoing and meaningful PL opportunities are the key to successful reading instruction. Selection of high-leverage, evidence-based curricula is not enough. Educators' knowledge of language and literacy, reading development and use of assessment and evaluation are necessary to ensure that all children are given the opportunity to learn to read. The content of PL should allow educators to demonstrate knowledge and implementation of assessment and evaluation of reading development, use of culturally, linguistically and historically responsive literacy, recognition and interventions for students with dyslexia and other reading disabilities, elements of word recognition and language comprehension, and how to evaluate curricula and assessments to determine if those tools will improve reading and literacy outcomes for children. PL must include, but also go beyond single workshops or awareness modules - PL should make use of coursework, summer institutes, coaching, apprenticeships and communities of practice that allow educators ongoing opportunities to evaluate and refine approaches to reading instruction.

See **Appendix J** for templates to use in planning ongoing and meaningful PL for your school, LEA or organization.

Created by:

The Office State Superintendent of Education (OSSE),
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The Comprehensive State Literacy Plan for the District of Columbia

APPENDIX

TABLE OF CONTENTS

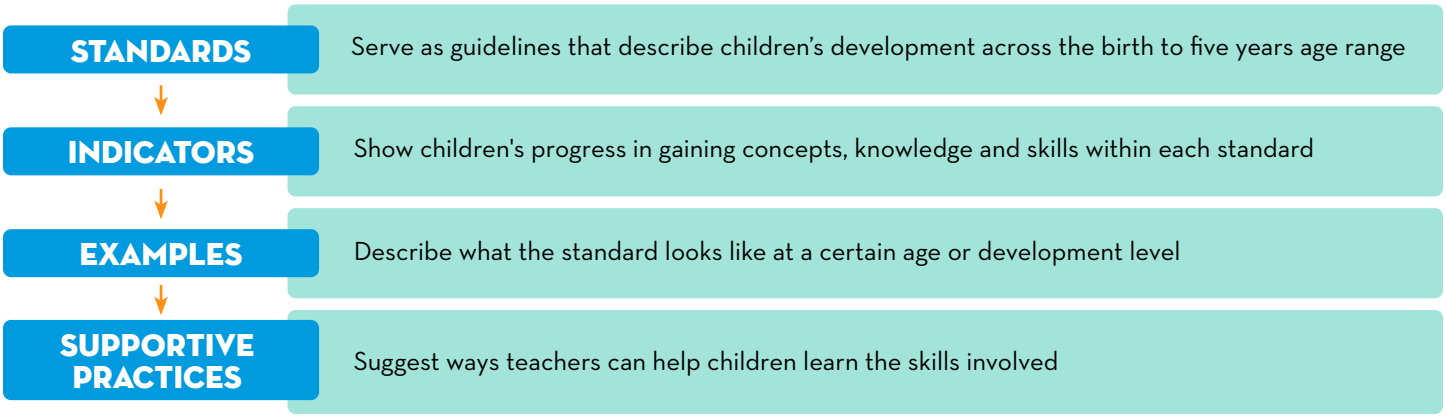
APPENDIX A: LITERACY INSTRUCTION: BIRTH THROUGH AGE 5

Elements of an Effective Early Literacy Instruction and the DC Early Learning Standards

The District of Columbia Early Learning Standards (DC ELS) include indicators for children birth through pre-K, as well as exit expectations for pre-K and kindergarten learners. DC ELS focus on the whole child and include a broad range of domains because young children's learning and development are interrelated and cross all areas of learning including communication, language and literacy. These standards provide educators and families with information about expectations for what children need to know and do, and describe how children progress at various ages and development levels. The DC ELS acknowledge the essential role of the teacher in intentionally guiding children's learning and development in a high-quality early care and education environment in partnership with families. Below are the elements of an effective early literacy instruction and their connection to the DC ELS:

- Positive adult-child relationships;
- A print-rich environment;
- Integrated language explorations in the curriculum;
- Reading and writing activities;
- Phonics and phonemic awareness; and
- Using differentiated teaching strategies to meet children's needs

The chart below shows how the early learning standards are organized.



Connection to DC ELS – Standards and Supportive Practices Facilitated by *Positive Adult-Child Relationships*	
STANDARD	**SUPPORTIVE PRACTICE**
Standard 5. Demonstrates understanding of spoken language	Talk to children throughout the day, describing what they are doing and experiencing (e.g., say "You're picking up green peas with your fingers.").
Standard 6. Uses language to express self	Respond to infants' babbling by talking to them.
Standard 8. Uses conventional conversational and other social communication skills	Encourage children to converse with you, prompting them as necessary with related questions (e.g., "What is your favorite animal? Why is it your favorite? Have you seen a real one?").
Standard 9. Demonstrates understanding of print concepts	Read favorite books repeatedly (e.g., "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?"). Provide children with access to books that have been read to them. Support children to hold and turn the pages in books during shared book readings.

Connection to DC ELS – Standards and Supportive Practices Facilitated by *Print-Rich Environment*	
STANDARD	**SUPPORTIVE PRACTICE**
Standard 9. Demonstrates understanding of print concepts	Display children's drawings and writing with dictated captions that explain their meaning.
Standard 10. Demonstrates comprehension of printed materials read aloud	Engage children in interactive book readings by responding to what interests them about the book, make comments and ask simple questions and support children to act out or repeat words or chants in books.
Standard 13. Understands the purpose of writing and drawing	Point to words in the environment (e.g., the child's name, EXIT). Read the word aloud and explain what it means (e.g., say, "Exit means a way out"). Use and point out the printed form of the child's name in English or child's other home language(s).

Connection to DC ELS – Standards and Supportive Practices Facilitated by *Integrated Language Exploration in the Curriculum*	
STANDARD	**SUPPORTIVE PRACTICE**
Standard 5. Demonstrates understanding of spoken language	Talk to children throughout the day, describing what they are doing and experiencing (e.g., say, "You're picking up green peas with your fingers."). Name objects and actions, introducing new words (e.g., say, "Here's your dinosaur blanket with the soft ribbon fringe."). Read and reread books to enhance understanding and vocabulary. Comment on the pictures and story. Encourage children to think of questions they want to ask the police officers when they come to visit. To help children understand what you're saying, clarify your message by demonstrating with concrete objects and movements (e.g., say, "Watch how I always keep this foot in front when I gallop.").
Standard 6. Uses language to express self	Respond to infants' babbling by talking to them. Ask simple questions and provide the answer if the toddler doesn't answer (e.g., "Is that a cat? Yes, that is a cat."). Build upon children's language, adding and reordering words as necessary to model complete sentences. Encourage children to tell stories about everyday routines such as walking to school. When children are arriving in the morning, have them tell how they got to school. Ask questions to encourage them to give details about their journey (e.g., "Did you pass any stores? Did you see any stop signs? Did you go when the light turned green?").
Standard 7. Uses conventional grammar and syntax	Sing descriptions of what you are doing (e.g., sing, "I'm going to change your diaper now."). Extend what toddlers say, modeling complete sentences (e.g., after children say, "doggy," say, "I hear the dog, too."). Converse in complete, grammatically correct sentences, rather than correct a child's language directly (e.g., if children say, "I teached them how," respond, "Oh, you taught them to pedal.").
Standard 8. Uses conventional, conversational and other social communication skills	Talk with infants during routines (e.g., explain, "I'm mashing this banana for you to eat."). Encourage children to converse with you, prompting them as necessary with related questions (e.g., "What is your favorite animal? Why is it your favorite? Have you seen a real one?").

Connection to DC ELS – Standards and Supportive Practices Facilitated by *Reading and Writing Activities*	
STANDARD	**SUPPORTIVE PRACTICE**
Standard 9. Demonstrates understanding of print concepts	Encourage frequent lap-reading, showing and talking about illustrations and by reading simple texts aloud. Display children's drawings and writing with dictated captions that explain their meaning.
Standard 10. Demonstrates comprehension of printed materials read aloud	Engage children in interactive book readings by responding to what interests them about the book, make comments and ask simple questions and support children to act out or repeat words or chants in books.
Standard 12. Writes letters and words	Provide many opportunities for children to explore writing by making crayons and paper available regularly.
Standard 13. Understands the purpose of writing and drawing	Point to words in the environment (e.g., the child's name, EXIT). Read the word aloud and explain what it means (e.g., say, "Exit means a way out"). Use and point out the printed form of the child's name in English or child's other home language(s).

Connection to DC ELS – Standards and Supportive Practices Facilitated by *Phonics and Phonemic Awareness*	
STANDARD	**SUPPORTIVE PRACTICE**
Standard 11. Hears and discriminates the sounds of English and/or home languages	Play with language sounds, like changing mamama to papapa and then lalalala Sing developmentally appropriate songs with rhymes (e.g., "Hickory, Dickory Dock") and sound play in English or child's other home language/s. Call attention to particular words in your morning message by highlighting them. Read a short poem and ask the children whether they hear any rhyming words in it, like night and light. Talk with children about how words can be broken into smaller parts. Use their names as examples (e.g., Sha·kir·a).

Connection to DC ELS – Standards and Supportive Practices Facilitated by Using Differentiated Teaching Strategies to Meet Children's Needs	
STANDARD	**SUPPORTIVE PRACTICE**
Standard 5. Demonstrates understanding of spoken language	To help children understand what you're saying, clarify your message by demonstrating with concrete objects and movements (e.g., say, "Watch how I always keep this foot in front when I gallop.").
Standard 6. Uses language to express self	Build upon children's language, adding and reordering words as necessary to model complete sentences. When children are arriving in the morning, have them tell how they got to school. Ask questions to encourage them to give details about their journey (e.g., "Did you pass any stores? Did you see any stop signs? Did you go when the light turned green?"). Encourage children to think of another way to ask their questions if you cannot understand what they are asking.
Standard 7. Uses conventional grammar and syntax and drawing	Extend what toddlers say, modeling complete sentences (e.g., after children say, "doggy," say, "I hear the dog, too."). Model expanded language by adding a few words to children's short utterances. Ask questions to encourage children to express themselves more fully.
Standard 8. Uses conventional conversational and other social communication skills	Narrate what you are doing as you change a child's shirt (e.g., say, "Put your left arm in. Where is your other arm?"). Encourage children to converse with you, prompting them as necessary with related questions (e.g., "What is your favorite animal? Why is it your favorite? Have you seen a real one?").
Standard 9. Demonstrates understanding of print concepts	Read favorite books repeatedly (e.g., "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?"). Provide children with access to books that have been read to them. Support children to hold and turn the pages in books during shared book readings. Talk about where to begin reading and how to track text as it is read. Offer children opportunities to play games with letters, e.g., "fishing" for letters and matching the ones they "catch" with letters on an alphabet chart.
Standard 10. Demonstrates comprehension of printed materials read aloud	Engage children in interactive book readings by responding to what interests them about the book, make comments and ask simple questions and support children to act out or repeat words or chants in books. While reading with children, ask them questions about what they notice in the illustrations. As you read, also ask questions that support comprehension, e.g., "Why does…?"
Standard 11. Hears and discriminates the sounds of English and/or home languages	Talk with infants in your own preferred language. Sing songs and lullabies with babies, including those from their families' languages and cultures. • Talk with children about how words can be broken into smaller parts. Use their names as examples (e.g., Sha·kir·a).
Standard 12. Writes letters and words	Make sure that writing materials (e.g., markers, crayons, pencils, post its, index card, copy paper, etc.) are available throughout the classroom. Invite children to participate in writing with you.
Standard 13.Understands the purpose of writing and drawing	Point to, identify and briefly discuss images in a book that interest the infant. Use and point out the printed form of the child's name in English or child's other home language(s). Encourage children to dictate captions for drawings they contribute to a class book about leaves.

Note: Due to the interrelatedness of learning and development in young children families, caregivers and early educators may also may see connections with other DC Early Learning Standards.

APPENDIX B: LITERACY INSTRUCTION, GRADES K-5

The Progression of Reading and Writing Competencies

The table below is adapted from the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the English Language Arts/English Development Framework for California Public Schools K-12, found at: www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/cf/

	GRADES K-1 As adapted from 2014 ELA/ ELD Framework, Chapter 3 - Curriculum Frameworks (CA Dept of Education) And https://bit.ly/3wCs5Rf	GRADES 2-3 As adapted from https://bit.ly/3xFLKRv And https://bit.ly/3wGYxCb	GRADES 4-5 As adapted from 2014 ELA/ ELD Framework, Chapter 5 - Curriculum Frameworks (CA Dept of Education) And https://bit.ly/3rb3xOn
PHONEMIC AWARENESS	• sound unit identity • sound unit isolation • sound unit blending • sound unit segmentation • sound unit addition • sound unit substitution • sound unit deletion • word building	• understand spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes) • produce initial, medial, and final sounds in single syllable words • continue to apply and practice skills with materials that reflect what they are learning about written language	• continue to apply and practice skills with materials that reflect what they are learning about written language
PHONICS	• understand the basic features of print • letter-sound and spelling-sound correspondences • decode one-syllable words • decode two-syllable words • word recognition	• long and short vowels • multisyllabic words • words with increasingly complex letter combinations • meaning of common prefixes and suffixes • irregularly spelled words	• use combined knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns, and morphology to decode accurately unfamiliar multisyllabic words, both in and out of context
FLUENCY	• decodable texts support comprehension • simple texts include short sentences, CVC words and sight words	• apply skills to new, less-consistent contexts • read increasingly complex texts • as accuracy and fluency builds, cognitive resources can be devoted to meaning • read with purpose and understanding	• read with purpose and understanding • read with accuracy, appropriate rate and expression • use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary
VOCABULARY	• through a print rich environment and instruction, students understand unknown words, multiple-meaning words, word relationships and nuances • use words and phrases that have been acquired through conversation, reading and being read to, and responding to texts	• determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple meaning words • understand figurative language, word relationships and nuances in words • accurately use conversational, general academic, and domain specific words and phrases • literal and nonliteral meanings of words • connections between words and their use	• use context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase • determine word meaning by the Greek and Latin roots • interpret figurative language like similes and metaphors • explain common idioms, adages, and proverbs • understand word relationships • consult reference materials like dictionaries, glossaries, and thesauruses
COMPREHENSION	• participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners • understand a text read aloud or information presented orally • ask and answer questions about a text	• -build on peers' conversations by linking their comments to the remarks of others • -ask for clarification and further explanation • -describe key ideas and details	• pose specific questions to clarify or follow-up on information • comments contribute to iscussions • paraphrase portions of text or information presented in different mediums-identify reasons and evidence for particular points

APPENDIX C: EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES FOR LITERACY

The following section explores evidence-based practices that teachers can implement in their classroom to increase **students' reading, listening, speaking, writing and motivation.** These strategies and approaches emphasize practices or ways of work that can be implemented in the classroom and have been shown to work in real classrooms with diverse groups of students through rigorous research. Many of the practices could fit into overlapping categories due to the reciprocal nature of reading skills. Each strategy or approach also specifies the appropriate age or grade level, but many practices can be used across multiple developmental stages. Each strategy includes the level of evidence associated with the practice.

Approaches and Strategies

In the tables below we have included both **instructional approaches** and **instructional strategies.** An approach is something that is broad, suffuses the whole classroom and has multiple outcomes. An approach that we encouraged is wide reading. When children read more, they develop fluency, build vocabulary and expand their prior knowledge. There is no one way to ensure wide reading. Teachers must share books, provide time for children to read in the classroom. Students need to share books and have opportunities like book clubs to create a community of learners.

A strategy is narrower. A strategy is a specific set of instructional moves designed to produce a specific outcome. For example, the research recommends the teaching of morphology - word parts. There are specific ways to develop students' knowledge of prefixes, suffixes and roots. This is a body of knowledge that good readers use. They also must have a cognitive strategy, a set of mental moves that they use to apply their knowledge of word parts when they encounter a new word while reading (Afflerbach, Pearson & Paris, 2013). Instructional strategies, what the teacher does in the classroom, differs from what the student or reader does in his mind. The former with good instruction, following the release of responsibility model should lead to the latter (Graves, 2016; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983).

Reading

Part 1: Phonemic Awareness, Letter-Sounds, and Letter Name			
STRATEGY/ APPROACH	**EVIDENCE LEVEL**	**AGE LEVEL**	**SUMMARY**
Direct Instruction on Phonemic Awareness	Strong	Grades K-2	Direct instruction in isolating, segmenting and blending phonemes will improve decoding and reading comprehension. Such instruction may begin in kindergarten or first grade, should be accompanied with manipulatives such markers or letter cards and should also include sound boxes (Elkonin boxes) to make the sound structure of words evident to students (Ehri, Nunes, Willows, Schuster, Yaghoub-Zadeh, 2001).
Integrate Phonemic Awareness with Texts	Strong	Grades K-2	Instruction in phonemic awareness becomes more effective when the instruction is integrated with the teaching of phonics and the reading of connected texts. The integration of phonemic awareness, phonics and reading is more motivating to students and results in greater improvement in reading ability (Cunningham, 1990).
Invented Spelling	Strong	Grades K-2	Involve kindergarten and first-grade students in writing while encouraging and modeling invented spelling. The process of invented spelling causes students to focus on and segment sounds within words and represent these sounds with letters. Repeated attempts at invented spelling deepens students' understanding of the sound structure of English (Adams, 1994; Martins & Silva, 2006).
Explicit Instruction in Letter Names and Sounds	Strong	Grades K-1	Children in kindergarten should be given explicit instruction in letter names along with letter sounds. These two bodies of knowledge reinforce each other and contribute to the growth in reading ability for children regardless of their level of language development (Levin, Shatil-Carmon, & Asif-Rave, 2006; Treiman & Kessler, 2003).
Small Group Instruction	Strong	Grades K-2	Given the larger degree of individual differences in language development and learning to read, phonemic awareness instruction is likely to be more effective in small group instruction where teachers can differentiate the time and nature of the instruction (Foorman, Chen, Carlson, Moats, Francis, & Fletcher, 2003).
Summary			**Summary**: Phonemic awareness, part of phonological awareness, is an insight young readers develop about the sound structure of words. Children must realize that words are composed of syllables and syllables composed of sounds. The ability to focus on individual sounds is essential for learning letter-sound relationships and decoding words. The critical phonemic awareness skills are the ability to identify, segment and blend sounds. Segmentation is necessary for spelling, blending is key to decoding. The research suggests that between 9 and 18 hours of training is optimal. Shorter amounts of time are less effective and longer amount of time rob instructional time from phonics. Teaching fewer skills is more effective than teaching more (NICHD, 2000). At all times, instruction in phonemic awareness is not an end in itself, but a means to enable phonics. The best instruction includes phonemic awareness as part of a phonics lesson (Beck & Beck, 2013).

Part 2: Phonics			
STRATEGY/ APPROACH	**EVIDENCE LEVEL**	**AGE LEVEL**	**SUMMARY**
Systematic Phonics Instruction	Strong	Grades K-3	Beginning in kindergarten and continuing through second-grade, students should be taught a systematic and synthetic approach to identifying words. Phonics instruction should include the letter-sound association of the common vowel patterns (short, long, r-controlled, digraphs and diphthongs) and consonant patterns (individual consonants, blends and digraphs) and a process of blending sounds to form words (Beck & Juel, 1995; Ehri, Nunes, Stahl, & Willows, 2001; Stahl, 1992).
Pair Phonics with Meaning Based Strategies	Strong	Grades K-2	Beginning readers need instruction in meaning-based strategies as an adjunct to their phonological and phonics knowledge (Scanlon, & Anderson, 2020). Meaning-based strategies such as checking decoding accuracy against the context, rereading when words do not make sense, and thinking flexibly about vowel sounds enhance students' ability to identify and retain new words. The combination of code-based strategies (phonemic awareness and phonics) and meaning-based foster students' ability to teach themselves new words (Share, 1995).
Use Decodable Texts	Strong	Grades K-2	The use of decodable text in reading instruction improves the likelihood that students will use decoding strategies and improve their reading accuracy (Cheatham, & Allor 2012; Jenkins, Peyton, Sanders, & Vadasy, 2004). The number of decodable words is not the only factor that should be included in selecting text for reading instruction. Other factors that should be considered when selecting texts are the number of high frequency words, the inclusion of high-utility phonics patterns, and high interest of the material (Fitzgerald, Elmore, Koons, Hiebert, Bowen, et al., 2015).
Decoding by Analogy	Strong	Grades 3-6	When older children, grades 3 to 6, struggle with word identification the research suggests that decoding strategies that focus on larger units, spelling patterns or rimes, are more effective especially when used with an approach called decoding by analogy. In decoding by analogy, students use what they know to pronounce words that they do not know (Ehri, Satlow, & Gaskins, 2009; Lovett, Lacerenza & Borden, 2000; NICHD, 2000).

Part 3: Vocabulary			
STRATEGY/ APPROACH	**EVIDENCE LEVEL**	**AGE LEVEL**	**SUMMARY**
Repeated exposure to new words in oral and written contexts	Promising	Grades K-3	Researchers estimate that it could take between five and 10 exposures for a student to learn a new word (Ausubel and Youssef, 1965; Jenkins, Stein, & Wysocki, 1984). Students encountering vocabulary words often and in a variety of contexts can have a significant impact on their learning (National Reading Panel, 2000). Students should be focused on learning words that are likely to appear in a variety of contexts.
Explicit Vocabulary Instruction	Strong	Grades 3-12	In Im*proving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices*, the authors recommend that teachers spend class time explicitly teaching vocabulary. When students receive explicit vocabulary instruction, they learn both the words they're being taught and the skills to infer the meaning of unfamiliar words incidentally in the future. Word knowledge is complex so students should have multiple opportunities to use new vocabulary in multiple contexts. Furthermore, understanding of Tier 1, 2 and 3 vocabulary will assist teachers in choosing which words to teach explicitly.
Teaching Students to Use Morphologi- cal Analysis	Moderate	Grades 3-8	Students can be taught the meaning of prefixes, suffixes and words roots and then guided through strategy instruction to use this knowledge to infer the meanings of new words that share the same word parts. The results of these studies suggest that students increase their vocabulary knowledge, spelling ability and in some studies their reading comprehension (Carisle, 2010). Subsequent studies suggest that when morphological analysis is combined with teaching of context clues results are more promising (Graves, 2016; Graves, Ringstaff, & Flynn, 2018).
Teaching Students to Use Context Clues	Moderate	Grades 3-8	Students can be taught to use specific strategies to infer word meanings from context ((Fukkink & de Glopper, 1998). These strategies enhance their natural ability to infer word meanings while they read. The instruction should follow the gradual release of responsibility model with extended practice over several weeks or months (Baumann, Edwards, Font, & Boland, 2005). The use of context clue strategies is enhanced when combined with the use of word parts or morphological analysis
Fostering Word Consciousness	Promising	Grades K-12	Fostering word consciousness if the affective or motivational side of vocabulary instruction. When children and adolescents become aware of words around, the power of these words and are interested in their meanings and origins, word learning is enhanced (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2012; Graves & Watts, 2002). Motivation enhances all types of learning, including word learning (Guthrie, 2015). When students are encouraged to talk about the quality and power of words when they read, discuss and write, their word knowledge grows (Scott & Nagy, 2004). Students who participated in a word consciousness program learned more words that were not explicitly taught than students in a program that did not encourage word consciousness.

Part 4: Fluency			
STRATEGY/ APPROACH	**EVIDENCE LEVEL**	**AGE LEVEL**	**SUMMARY**
Emphasize Wide Reading in and Out of School	Moderate	Grades 1-12	Encourage children to read widely and deeply across many different genres. The amount of reading, or print exposure, is linked to growth in reading ability in general and to reading fluency. As children move through the elementary grades and into middle and high school, the volume of reading becomes a stronger predictor of reading success (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Kuhn, 200; Spichtig, Hiebert, Vorstius, Pascoe, Pearson, & Radach, 2016).
Repeated Reading	Strong	Grades 2-6	The repeated reading of short texts with feedback from the teacher or from a peer improves oral reading fluency as measured by reading rate. Typically, the students read a short text, teachers provide feedback and students read again to increase reading rate, accuracy and prosody (Kuhn, & Stahl, 2003; NICHD, 2000). Research suggests that repeated reading of more difficult texts yields greater gains than reading easier texts (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003). Repeated reading practice may take place as an intervention or part of small-group classroom instruction.
Assisted Reading	Strong	Grades K-12	Assisted reading improves oral reading fluency when the students listen to a text read by a more skillful adult, peer or audio recording. Listening while following along in a text or reading along with the model boosts oral reading fluency and reading comprehension in part by increasing exposure to text (Brown, Mohr, Wilcox, & Barrett, 2018; Shany & Biemiller, 1995).
Model Expressive Oral Reading	Moderate	Grades 3-6	Modeling the features of oral reading prosody, expression, phrasing and intonation patterns, followed by student practice improve oral reading prosody and oral reading rates (Schwanenflugel, Hamilton, Kuhn, Wisenbaker, & Stahl, 2004). As children decrease the number of pauses when they read and improve the intonation patterns their comprehension improves (Miller, & Schwanenflugel, 2008).

Part 5: Comprehension			
STRATEGY/ APPROACH	**EVIDENCE LEVEL**	**AGE LEVEL**	**SUMMARY**
Close Reading of Complex Texts	Strong	Grades 3-12	Close reading does not always follow a fixed structure, but is composed of multiple parts of a reading process in order to guide students toward deep understanding of the text and build strong reading comprehension muscles in students. Teachers can use the following strategies to implement close reading: • Multiple reads of a text for different purposes, with guidance and support • Annotation and Note-taking: Interacting with a text by annotating or taking notes about what a student reads enhances reading comprehension. These interactions require students to prioritize what to annotate or write notes about, resulting in connecting ideas and organizing their new learning. In a review of 23 studies, the *Carnegie Writing to Read* (2010) report determined that "taking notes about a text proved to be better than just reading, reading and rereading, reading and underlining important information, and receiving explicit instruction in reading practices." • Text-Dependent Questions: Fisher and Frey's work on text-dependent questions advocates for the impact of questions that move students from literal comprehension to deep comprehension. When questions are designed with the text's complexities and big ideas in mind, then students are likely to build comprehension by responding to text-dependent questions in writing or speaking (Fisher, Frey, Anderson & Thayre, 2016). • Opportunities for Discussion: When students discuss their analysis of the text in whole group or small groups, they are able to make deeper connections about their reading.
Direct Instruction of Comprehen- sion Strategies	Strong	Grades 3-12	Effective teachers instruct their students in applying comprehension strategies where appropriate to the text and task. This does not mean that teachers should teach strategies one at a time, with an extended and prolonged practice of the strategy itself. Rather, teachers should primarily support students in reading the text for a compelling purpose, applying the right strategies where necessary. Students do not innately know how to summarize, for example, so teachers must explicitly teach them to apply summary strategically when they're reading a complex text. Most research shows that teachers are most effective when they support students in choosing the right comprehension strategy in the moment when facing a comprehension challenge. Teachers can explicitly teach: summarizing, drawing inferences, self-questioning, and activating prior knowledge (Dewitz, Graves, Juel, & Graves, 2020).
Teach Text Structure	Strong	Grades K-12	Primary and secondary students benefit from exposure to a wide variety of text structures and explicit instruction. Explicit modeling, collaborative identification and increasingly allowing students to identify independently will support students' learning about text structures. When students understand text structures, they will learn to notice how texts are structured and use that understanding to better organize the information and knowledge they gather from a text (Duke, Pearson, Strachan, and Billman 2011).
Build Disciplinary and Word Knowledge	Strong	Grades K-12	Students who bring a wealth of knowledge about a topic to a text "bring knowledge to the comprehension process, and that knowledge shapes our comprehension," which in turn builds more knowledge, so "knowledge begets comprehension" in a "virtual cycle" (Duke, Pearson, Strachan, and Billman 2011). Kintsch's (1998, 2004) Construction–Integration model holds that students' related knowledge about a text significantly impacts their comprehension of the text.

Writing			
STRATEGY/ APPROACH	**EVIDENCE LEVEL**	**AGE LEVEL**	**SUMMARY**
Explicitly Teach Writing Strategies in the Writing Process	Strong	Grades 2-12	Teachers can help students become more effective writers by explicitly teaching specific strategies for different stages of the writing process. The writing process includes planning, drafting, sharing, evaluating, revising and editing. Students should learn how to move fluidly between the different stages of the process and altering their plans along the way. To carry this out, students need to practice different strategies for each component of the writing process. Although these strategies may look different depending on the age of the child, teachers should teach strategies directly through a gradual release of responsibility from teacher to student. Find writing strategies for each phase of the writing process here.
Effective Feedback and Revision	Promising	Grades 6-12	By regularly assessing student performance and providing timely feedback on work, teachers learn more about student progress on learning objectives and can better tailor their lessons (Graham, et al., 2012). Before teaching a new skill, assess students' strengths and areas for improvement. After instruction on a specific skill, provide targeted feedback on written products that align to the specific learning objective. Feedback from the teacher can be helpful, and peer feedback or self assessments may enhance student writing as well. Regularly monitor student progress on different writing skills and share data with students. This can be a critical part of building an engaged community of writers in the classroom (Graham, et al., 2016). Click here to see an example of using color-coding to evaluate student writing.
Teaching with Model**s**	Strong	Grades K-12	Students should be exposed to exemplary texts from a variety to sources. These sources can range from published texts to teacher's writing to peer writing. Teachers should read out loud or have students read exemplary texts, paying attention to certain elements of the authors writing. Students should then be asked to recreate elements of the text in their own writing (Graham, 2012). Using models can help students understand writing for different genres and purposes. This strategy can work at all grade levels from replicating sentence structure to recreating a text on a different subject. Click here to see examples of how to use this in your classroom.

Speaking and Listening

A key foundation to literacy is oral language (Fillmore & Snow, 2002). Exposure to complex language can help children develop strong reading and writing skills (Himmele, 2009). The National Early Literacy Panel (Lonigan & Shanahan, 2009) found in their meta-analysis of 30 studies a relationship between oral language skills and reading comprehension for young children. The analysis shows a relationship between listening comprehension in kindergarten students and reading comprehension through age 7. Furthermore, for Emerging Bilingual students, focusing on oral language builds vocabulary, strengthens connections and deepens comprehension (Foorman, Herrara, Petscher, Mitchell & Truckenmiller, 2015). In the classroom setting, educators can focus on strategies and approaches that develop and enhance student's ability to speak and listen in order to promote literacy.

Speaking			
STRATEGY/ APPROACH	**EVIDENCE LEVEL**	**AGE LEVEL**	**SUMMARY**
Teach Students Academic Language Skills	Promising	Grades K-3	Summary: Explicitly teaching academic language can help increase oral language development. Academic language skills help students to "understand the formal structures and words found in books and school, such as summarize, describe, and connect." Examples of this language include inferential language, narrative language skills and academic vocabulary knowledge. Inferential language instruction helps students think beyond their immediate context by supporting their predicting, problem-solving, or comparing and contrasting skills. Narrative language skills help students organize information in a logical sequence and use appropriate grammatical structure. Finally, building academic vocabulary helps mitigate some of the challenges to comprehension that students face by front-loading common words that align to curriculum standards (Forman, et al., 2016). Ideas to integrate these into your classroom can be found here: Recommendation 1: Teach students academic language skills
Literature Circle	Demon- strates a Rationale	Grades 3-12	Literature circles are an activity where students lead discussions and responses to a book they are all reading (Daniels, 2006). In this activity, teachers act as a support while students take on roles to continue discourse and analyze texts. Literature circles have the potential to improve comprehension skills, enhance responsibility, increase responsibility and expand discussion (Elhess & Egbert, 2015). The social interaction and communication that occurs in the discussions in literature circles allows for students to practice their oral skills and oral fluency (Elhess & Egbert, 2015). Literature circles have the ability to increase culturally relevancy and engagement in the classroom, but must be used consistently and repeatedly to reap these benefits (Daniels, 2006; Woodruff & Griffin, 2017). Integrating technology into literature circles can help increase collaboration and engagement (Larson, 2009). Learn how to implement literature circles here.
Extended Discussion of Text Meaning and Interpreta- tion	Moderate	Grades 6-12	Teachers should provide opportunities for students to engage in high-quality discussions of texts in various content areas. To have an effective discussion, students should use text evidence, background knowledge, and reasoning to support or challenge conclusions. Furthermore, students should listen to other points of view from others in the discussion. Using authentic questions and structured protocols can help make the use of discussions effective. Extended discussions can both increase reading comprehension and oral language skills in the classroom (Kamil, Borman, Kral, Salinger, & Torgensen, 2008). Find out more about a variety of discussion types here.

Listening			
STRATEGY/ APPROACH	**EVIDENCE LEVEL**	**AGE LEVEL**	**SUMMARY**
Peer Response Groups	Strong Evidence	Grades K-5	Peer Response Groups aims to improve the language and achievement of English learners by grouping students together to work on a task. Students may be grouped in a variety of ways including in heterogenous or homogenous groups. In Peer Response groups, four to five students take shared responsibility for a task. Each student has a role and students must interact and discuss to complete a task. For example, if students are editing a passage together in a Peer Response Group, one student edits punctuation, another edits spelling, and another provides feedback on the focus of the text. Specific instruction on how to assume individual roles in a group is required before implementing the routine use of this strategy (What Works Clearinghouse, 2007). Learn more about implementing peer groups here.
Dialogic Reading	Strong	Early Child- hood	Dialogic Reading is an interactive shared picture book reading practice designed to enhance young children's language and literacy skills. During the shared reading practice, the adult and the child switch roles so that the child learns to become the storyteller with the assistance of the adult who functions as an active listener and questioner. (What Works Clearinghouse, 2007). This intervention can be used with children individually or in small groups. The technique follows the PEER sequence with a short interaction between the child and adult about what they are reading. The adult **P**rompts the child to say something about the book, **E**valuates the child's response, **E**xpands the child's response, and **R**epeats the prompt. Adults can use five types of prompts to help increase student knowledge: completion, recall, open-ended, "wh-" questions and distancing. Using this intervention has shown positive impacts on oral language skills. Learn more about implementing this strategy: Dialogic Reading: An Effective Way to Read Aloud with Young Children
Retelling	Strong	Grades K-3	Students listen to a story read aloud then describe orally the main points of what they read to another student. To retell, students must be able to identify and explain the key elements of a text in order to communicate them to their peers (Shanahan, et al., 2010). This strategy has been shown to increase both reading and listening comprehension. Learn more about implementing retelling in your classroom here.

Motivation

Motivating children to read has several roots. It stems from students' sense of competence and a growing sense of efficacy. It stems from interests and books aligned with their personal and cultural backgrounds. Motivation stems from goals of the reader and the value she places on the tasks associated with the reading curriculum. Finally, motivation stems from social forces such as recognition and praise within and outside the classroom (Toste, Didion, Peng, Filderman, & McClelland, 2020; Wigfield, A., Guthrie, J. T., Tonks, S., & Perencevich, K. C. 2004). Below are strategies and approaches that help increase motivation in the classroom.

STRATEGY/ APPROACH	EVIDENCE LEVEL	AGE LEVEL	SUMMARY
Concept Oriented Reading Instruction	Strong	Grades3-8	When comprehension instruction is embedded in a content area of study students' motivation to read, to use of strategies and their general reading comprehension improves compared to traditional reading instruction conducted within the reading/language arts block. The value teachers and students place on the task increases motivation to read and to engage with the assignments. (Guthrie, Wigfield, Barbosa, Perencevich, Taboada, Davis, & Tonks, 2004).
Building Self- Efficacy	Moderate	Grades K-3	Teachers should help students appreciate their growing competence and help them understand that their efforts influence their accomplishments. Self-efficacy and self-concept related to reading emerge slowly during the first three years of learning to read. The more teachers do to develop reading ability the more students will build a positive self-concept about their reading ability (Chapman & Turner, 1997).
Attribution Training	Moderate	Grades K-12	Attribution training has been shown to produce positive effects on reading motivation and reading achievement. In attribution training, teachers engaged in discussions with their students to study the relationship between effort, strategies and achievement. The more students attribute their growth to their own efforts the greater their motivation and achievement. Attribution training in reading has the greatest impact when it is combined with strategy instruction (Robertson, 2000).
Develop-ing and Nurturing Interests	Moderate	Grades K-12	The research suggests that teachers can have a positive influence on students' interest in reading. Teachers can trigger interests by sharing books and authors and regularly reading aloud in the classroom. Teachers can sustain and nurture students' interests by building the students' knowledge and competence with the genres, demonstrating their own interest in the book, author or genre and through giving positive feedback. Small groups, literature circles also sustain and build interest through peer recognition (Hidi & Renninger, 2006).

Supporting English Learners and Dual Language Students

STRATEGY/ APPROACH	EVIDENCE LEVEL	AGE LEVEL	SUMMARY
Provide designated time to develop oral language proficiency	Strong	K-12	English learners (ELs) and emergent bilinguals (EB) need time to develop their oral proficiency. There is a strong link between oral language proficiency and text-level skills such as comprehension (Lesaux & Geva, 2006). Focused time for oral language development should be considered part of Tier 1 core instruction. If ELs and EB need either Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention, this would be in addition to the designated oral language development time.
Sheltered instruction practices	Strong	K-12	The research suggests that integrated time for developing language proficiency is most effectively accomplished by using sheltered instructional techniques to support students' content-area learning. Examples of sheltered instructional techniques include having a clear content and language objective, building knowledge background, providing information in a comprehensive way, teaching and learning strategies, and providing students with opportunities to interact with peers and teachers (see Echeverria, Vogt, & Short, 2012).
Use peer-supported instruction/learning	Strong	K-12	Using peers to support the learning of English or a partner language in a dual language program is consistently highlighted in research literature. With peer support, students can practice academic (standard) language and social language. Students are grouped or partnered with peers with varying level of language proficiency, allowing them to learn content while having the opportunity to practice their language skills in a safe environment. Peer support provides a safe environment for ELs to thrive, perform, participate and produce (S. Baker et al., 2014; Escamilla et al., 2014).
Teach vocabulary across content areas	Strong	K-12	Research recommends three sub-recommendations to help teachers teach vocabulary across the content areas: 1. Provide opportunities for in-depth understanding of words through reading, writing, listening and speaking. Findings from multiple studies support using instructional strategies such as student-friendly definitions, examples and non-examples and requiring using target words in their writing and discussion with teachers and peers (e.g., Cena et al., 2013; Lawrence, & White, 2009; Vaughn et al., 2009. 2. Teach high-utility academic words. This requires teachers to teach a set of academic vocabulary words across multiple days using multiple instructional strategies (e.g., August et al., 2009; Baker et al., 2014; Silverman & Hines, 2009). Teachers should consider both general academic vocabulary words and domain-specific vocabulary (s. Baker et al., 2014). 3. Teach word-learning strategies. Because students cannot possible learn all the words they need from instruction, they must be taught word-learning strategies to determine word meaning on their own. Three word-learning strategies are discussed in research literature: (a) morphology (i.e., word parts), (b) context clues, and (c) cognates (see S. Baker et al., 2014).
Provide instruction and instructional support in the students' first language	Strong	PreK-12	Research literature recommends three sub-recommendations for providing instruction and instructional support in a student's primary language. 1. Consider transferability of literacy skills for students literate in their first language. Students come to school with a cultural and linguistic background that can help them become literate in English. Several literacy skills transfer from a student's first language to English (Genesee & Geva, 2006). For teachers, it is important to consider these skills and show the students the connections between them. 2. Provide students with bilingual and dual language programs when possible. Research is clear that ELs benefit from either bilingual or dual-language programs. The research is also clear that these programs do not create academic deficits or confusion for students (Francis, Lesaux, & August, 2006). The literature that does exist examining dual language programs shows that English learners who learn two languages in dual language schools, for at least five school years, experience positive outcomes. 3. Provide instruction with students' first-language support. Even in English-only instruction, first-language support is useful when used strategically for activating prior knowledge and making sure the information provided to students is comprehensible. Although there are limited empirical studies using students' first language support (Orosco, Swanson, O'Connor, & Lussier, 2013), there is consensus in the field that the use of native language can support English learners in understanding content (August, Artzi, Kuchle, et al., 2015).

APPENDIX D: DIVERSE LEARNERS: SUPPORTS FOR MULTILINGUAL AND ENGLISH LEARNERS IN DC

Considerations for Cross-Language Connections Strategies

The planning and implementation of cross-language connection strategies consider:

PHONOLOGY (SOUND SYSTEM)	MORPHOLOGY (WORD FORMATION)
• Sound-symbol correspondence • Silent letters • Sounds that are similar in two languages • Sounds that are different in two languages	• Prefixes • Suffixes
SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR (SENTENCE STRUCTURE)	**PRAGMATICS (LANGUAGE USE)**
• Rules for punctuation • Word order • Subject-verb agreement • Regular and irregular verbs	• Cultural norms • Context for meaning-making words or sentences

APPENDIX E: DIVERSE LEARNERS: SUPPORTS FOR MULTILINGUAL AND ENGLISH LEARNERS IN DC

Bilingual Behaviors

English learners and emergent bilingual students might demonstrate one or more of the following language behaviors (Soltero et al., 2012):

TYPE	DESCRIPTOR	EXAMPLES
Inter-sentential codeswitching	Occurs between sentences; begins in one language and ends in a different language.	Aprendo a hacer la división. It's very easy.
Bidirectional syntax transfer	Structures unique to one language area applied to the other.	The dog of my cousin. El verde coche.
Bidirectional phonetic transfer	Principles unique to one language applied to the other.	Japi/Happy Guader/Water
Reverse punctuation	Conventions in one language are applied to the other.	**¿Do you speak English?** Hablas inglés?
Literal translation	Expression are translated "word by word" from one language to the other.	I am ten years old. Yo soy diez años viejo.

APPENDIX F: DIVERSE LEARNERS: SUPPORTS FOR MULTILINGUAL AND ENGLISH LEARNERS IN DC

Features of Planning for Biliteracy

ORACY:

Fosters the development of speaking and listening skills.

- Dialogue to ensure meaningful participation in literacy related discussions
- Vocabulary to refine and expand students' word and concept range
- Language structures to expand grammatical complexity of students' speech

READING:

Encompasses the teaching of literacy in LOTE and English simultaneously and interconnectedly.

- Explicit foundational reading skills teaching of concepts of print, decoding, and fluency.
- Reading comprehension skills such as identifying main ideas and key supporting details, structures of literacy/ informational texts, and features of a text.
- Comprehension strategies to acquire knowledge from a text included but not limited to activating prior knowledge, making predictions, making personal and intertextual connections, cognate study, etc.
- Reading of a range of text types appropriate to each grade level such as narratives, historical, explanatory, science fiction, poetry, etc.

WRITING:

Effective biliterate writing development practices recommend writing directly connected to oracy and reading.

- Writing conventions to learn and practice grammar, spelling, and punctuation is an assignment that has real-world relevance.
- Writing skills to develop a system of practices to enrich written products. For example research, outlining, giving and receiving feedback, editing, time management, etc.
- Writing strategies to communicate an idea or engage the audience by reading to build knowledge, use an outline to organize a writing piece, post questions for a written response, set a tone and intention, use technology to produce, publish, and interact with others about writing.
- Writing a variety of texts appropriate to each grade level such as opinion pieces, argumentative pieces, information report, narratives, recount events, etc.

METALANGAGE:

Developed across languages by implementing cross-language connection strategies to think and talk about languages.

- Morphological awareness to develop understanding on how words can be broken into smaller units of meaning. for example: book-boks; libro-libros; play-played; juego-jugué.
- Syntactic awareness to develop the ability to monitor the relationships among the words in a sentence in order to understand while reading, talking, or writing. For example: The red car is new - El carro rojo es nuevo.
- Cognate study to develop the ability to understand words in different language that share an etymological root resulting in similar spelling, meaning, and pronunciation. For example: community-comunidad; leader-líder; observation-observación, etc.

APPENDIX G: DIVERSE LEARNERS - SPECIAL EDUCATION

Evidence- and Research-Based Practices in Reading Acquisition

EVIDENCE- AND RESEARCH-BASED INTERVENTIONS	DESCRIPTION OF INTERVENTIONS	LEARNING CHARACTERISTICS	DESCRIPTION OF IMPROVEMENT
Prevention through Intensity of Instruction	Intensive interventions early	Low reading skill levels	Increasing intensity is an effective practice for students with disabilities or at risk of being identified with a disability; may prevent reading difficulties
Vocabulary Interventions	Listening to and using complex oral language, extended instruction, and rich vocabulary instruction	Difficulty with meaning of words	Ability to provide better definitions of words and increased vocabulary
Fluency Interventions	Repeated reading, reading a range of text, or opportunities to practice	Students spending more time decoding, impacting reading comprehension	Fluency interventions may increase reading fluency and comprehension
Peer-Assisted or Collaborative Learning	Small group or one-to-one instruction with peers	Difficulty with basic reading skills (i.e., phonological awareness, alphabet letters, decoding, word recognition, fluency)	Increases the intensity of reading instruction, resulting in improved outcomes in comprehension

APPENDIX H: ASSESSMENT & PROGRESS MONITORING FOR LITERACY

Key Aspects of Assessment Quality (Center for Assessment, 2020)

ASSESSMENT QUALITY	
Construct & Purpose	It is important that the assessment constructs are aligned to the items meant to measure those constructs and that the data collected through the assessment match the intended purposes.
Fairness	Assessment fairness refers to ensuring that the test is impartial, accessible and appropriate and that all test takers have legitimate opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills called for on the test.
Quality Assurance	Quality assurance is a way of preventing mistakes and shortcomings in all testing products and processes from testing creation, administration and reporting (e.g., detailed and replicable procedures).
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	When applied to assessment design and administration, UDL provides flexibility in the ways information is presented, in the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and in the ways students are engaged. UDL reduces barriers in instruction, provides appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges, and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students who are English learners.
Reliability	Generally, reliability refers to the consistency of test scores across real or hypothetical replications of a testing procedure. Reliability helps quantify consistency across different test questions thought to tap the same knowledge and skills.
Validity	Validity refers to the degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretations of test scores for the intended use of that test. Validity asks, “do the test scores mean what they were intended to mean, and what is the evidence to support such claims?”
Peer Review summative assessment only	Peer review is a legally required process used by the US Department of Education to evaluate the degree to which state assessment systems meet the technical and inclusion requirements spelled out in law and regulations. Peers are individuals with technical and/or operational expertise and experience with state assessment systems.

APPENDIX I: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT

Stages of a Professional Learning Framework

Stage one: Organize for Effectiveness School leaders establish a school literacy committee (SLC), including stakeholders representing educators, families, and leadership. The committee should include a diversity of experiences and perspectives and should establish norms for ongoing engagement and collaboration.

Stage two: Develop Partnerships The SLC should generate a list of potential partners to support the implementation of the professional learning related to the Literacy Improvement Plan. Partners should be vetted through the LEA and should offer supports that will directly address the Professional Learning Plan (See Appendix I).

Stage three: Needs Assessment, SLC undertakes a needs assessment that provides school, and ideally classroom-level student data that identifies current areas of strengths and needs. This needs assessment should include trends in student assessment data related to all areas of reading development including disaggregated data related to phonological awareness, decoding, encoding, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and written language. The needs assessment should also catalog all current reading curricular options, including the general ELA curriculum and intervention programs. Ideally, the needs assessment should assess the knowledge and skills of educators related to reading instruction. Note - if the school or LEA does not have access to student data on reading development, the use of a dyslexia or phonology and decoding screener should be conducted for all grades (P-12).

Stage four: Create a Literacy Plan Using the needs assessment and/or screening data, the SLC should work with educators and other stakeholders (parents, students, community members) to identify areas of greatest need in order to develop a set of priorities for both student and educator learning in reading that aligns with the broader priorities of the school/LEA. Using these priorities, the SLC should map out a Literacy Improvement Plan that includes a clear set of achievable objectives and plan for implementation. Milestones should include measurable outcomes for addressing areas of student reading development, curricular alignments, and educator knowledge and skills. Timelines should be at a minimum for one academic year, ideally with goals three to five years in the future. The timeline should include how the school will make meaning from ongoing screening and progress monitoring data and how the school/LEA will use tiered approaches to address a variety of reading developmental levels. The SLC should set regular check-in meetings and be involved in the implementation and evaluation of the professional learning activities.

Stage five: Curriculum Review (aka "weeding before planting") the SLC should review the current curriculum of professional learning (PL) opportunities to ensure that activities are aligned with priorities. Review should ensure that approaches presented in current PL are evidence-based and the intended outcomes of those programs align with priorities. For example, if student performance data indicates ongoing poor performance in phonological awareness or decoding, instructional methods should be selected and developed that are proven to support those need areas. If the current PL activities do not align with or are irrelevant to identified priorities, new programs should be adopted.

Stage six: Implementation of PL activities to support the adoption of aligned priorities. Activities should be planned for at least each academic year, with monthly, or ideally bimonthly professional learning opportunities. PL activities should include a combination of the following:

- Summer learning programs
- Monthly or bi-monthly learning program
- In-classroom Coaching
- Individualized feedback sessions
- Student work and collaborative planning analysis sessions
- Peer-lead professional learning communities
- Expert lectures or conferences
- Coursework or academic training

Stage seven: Progress Monitoring and Adjustments Engage in ongoing progress monitoring and implementation tracking to ensure that PL activities continue to support priorities. Eliminate ineffective activities and offer supplemental supports as needed. Collect information on adoption, educator efficacy and attitudes, and student outcomes. Review data to make decisions on next steps or to adjust priorities for the upcoming school year(s).

APPENDIX J: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT

Professional Learning Plan
TEMPLATE A

NAME OF ORGANIZATION/LEA/SCHOOL:

LEA/EARLY CHILDHOOD PROVIDER OR CONSORTIUM LEAD NAME:

SMARTIE GOAL:

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE OR INTERVENTION:

PL DESCRIPTION	DURATION	SUSTAINED	INTENSIVE	COLLABORATIVE	JOB-EMBEDDED	DATA-DRIVEN	CLASSROOM-FOCUSED
	(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY FOR EACH ACTIVITY.)						
1.							
2.							
3.							

RESOURCES REQUIRED	OUTCOMES/EVALUATION
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Professional Learning Plan

TEMPLATE B

Provide a brief description of how the overall plan for professional development meets the six criteria high-quality professional learning.

SUSTAINED: Taking place over an extended period; longer than one day or a one-time workshop.

INTENSIVE: Focused on a discreet concept, practice or program.

COLLABORATIVE: Involving multiple educators, educators and coaches, or a set of participants grappling with the same concept or practice and in which participants work together to achieve shared understanding.

JOB-EMBEDDED: A part of the ongoing, regular work of instruction and related to teaching and learning taking place in real-time in the teaching and learning environment.

DATA-DRIVEN: Based upon and responsive to real-time information about the needs of participants and their students.

INSTRUCTIONALLY FOCUSED: Related to the practices taking place in the learning environment during the teaching process.

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