

## BACKGROUND AND GENERAL INFORMATION

# Self-Assessment Tool for Aligning Illinois Educator Preparation Programs to the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan

## CREATION OF THE PLAN

The **Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan** was developed by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) with valuable input and advocacy from Illinois educators, leaders, and literacy advocates. The plan was mandated by **Public Act 103-0402**. It aims to build districts' capacity to ensure that every child has access to accessible, high-quality, evidence-based reading instruction. The Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan identifies Seven Components of Literacy as the foundational elements to literacy instruction: Oracy, Phonological Awareness, Word Recognition, Fluency, Vocabulary, Comprehension, and Writing. The plan offers an in-depth explanation of the essential roles these elements play in literacy instruction. The plan's key components include:

- Effective Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction
- Educator Professional Learning, Development, and Support
- Effective Literacy Leadership
- Support and Implementation Considerations
- Tools and Resources



Additional resources also were created as part of the ISBE's efforts to make the plan easily accessible. They are available on the ISBE [Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan](#) webpage. [The Educator Preparation Reader's Guide](#) was instrumental in identifying key areas of the plan and informed the creation of this Self-Assessment Tool for Aligning Illinois Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) to the literacy plan.

## ILLINOIS STRATEGIC PLAN AND EVIDENCE-BASED LITERACY INSTRUCTION

The [2024-2027 Illinois Strategic Plan](#) built upon the agency's commitment to continuous improvement and responsiveness to the evolving needs of the nearly 2 million school-aged children in Illinois that ISBE serves. Literacy instruction for schools and higher education in Illinois is addressed in the Strategic Plan. Goal 3.1 of the Strategic Plan calls for the following regarding institutions of higher education (IHEs):

Goal  
**3.1**

### Higher Education

ISBE will work with institutions of higher education to develop professional learning communities of practice to promote the use of resources for literacy instruction.

## TWO EXTERNAL OBJECTIVES WERE IDENTIFIED:

### 3.1.1

By the end of FY 2025, in collaboration with institutions of higher education, ISBE will develop Communities of Practice promoting effective literacy instruction in educator preparation programs.

### 3.1.2

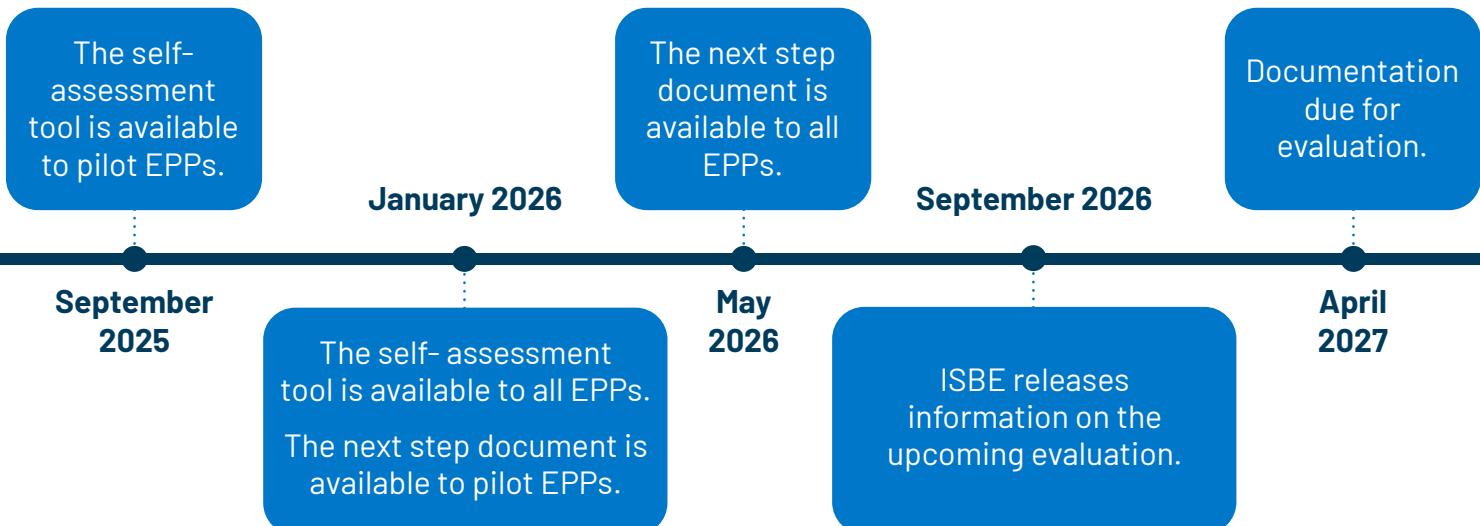
By the end of FY 2027, ISBE will conduct a program evaluation to determine the extent to which instruction in educator preparation programs aligns to literacy preparation standards and the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan.

## CREATION OF THE LITERACY IN EDUCATOR PREPARATION STEERING TEAM

ISBE decided to assist IHEs in preparing for the evaluation called for in the Strategic Plan by creating a self-assessment tool. The tool identifies the key content of the literacy plan that EPPs should provide teacher candidates during their enrollment in the program as part of coursework and field practicum. This tool aids in identifying areas of alignment and areas needing improvement to ensure that teacher candidates are well-prepared to deliver evidence-based literacy instruction.

ISBE requested members of the educator preparation program community participate in a Literacy in Educator Preparation steering team that was tasked with aiding ISBE in the creation of the self-assessment tool. A Literacy in Educator Preparation Program's Community of Practice was formed to fulfill the objective of Strategic Plan Goal 3.1.1. Fourteen members of the steering team were selected based upon previous experience in literacy in educator preparation; demographic information, such as IHE location, size, and type (private or public); and the volunteer's ability to participate in bimonthly meetings. The Literacy in Educator Preparation steering team upheld the following values, which were established through group discussion at their kickoff meeting.

- Innovation and Forward Focus: Emphasize innovation and focus on future possibilities.
- Student-Centered: Keep students, including teacher candidates, at the center of all work.
- Transparency: Ensure clarity on tool usage and objectives.
- Active Engagement: Participate actively and share views.
- Respect and Equity: Honor differences and strive for equity in literacy education.



The steering team was crucial to developing the Self-Assessment Tool for Aligning Illinois Educator Preparation Programs to the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan, which is designed to ensure EPPs meet the highest standards and effectively support future educators across the state in delivering evidence-based literacy instruction aligned to the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan. The tool will provide the framework that ISBE will use to conduct the program evaluation by June 30, 2027.

## STEERING TEAM MEMBERS

**Scott Filkins**, Program Coordinator, University of Illinois Urbana Champaign

**Dr. Susan Foster**, Assistant Professor, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

**Dr. Melissa Jones-Bromenshenkel**, Professor, Eastern Illinois University

**Dr. Karen Lauritzen**, Assistant Professor, Millikin University

**Dr. Kenya Mandeldove Sadler**, Leadership Coach, University of Illinois Chicago

**Dr. Jacquelyn Benchik-Osborne**, Assistant Professor, Chicago State University

**Dr. Sandra Lucia Osorio**, Professor, Erikson Institute

**Dr. Alexandra "Niki" Owens**, Assistant Professor of Education, McKendree University

**Dr. Dawn Schwarzkopf**, Professor, Olivet Nazarene University

**Dr. Melizabeth Santos**, Assistant Professor, Dominican University

**Dr. Thera Tilmon**, Assistant Professor, National Louis University

**Maxine Welcome**, Department Chair, Relay Graduate School of Education

**Dr. Concetta A. Williams**, Professor, Chicago State University

**Dr. Christopher Worthman**, Program Director and Professor, DePaul University