READER'S GUIDE

2024 Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan

Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan

COMMUNITY & FAMILY
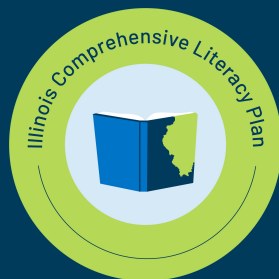
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Reader's Guide: Community & Family

This guide is designed as a companion to the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan to support readers in understanding and contributing to the effective implementation of evidence-based literacy practices. Tailored specifically for the community and families, it outlines relevant strategies, offers suggested readings to align with their support roles, and includes workbook pages for practical involvement. This resource aims to empower readers to support enhanced literacy instruction and equitable learning environments, helping every student achieve literacy success.

Guide Audience

Parents, guardians, family members, caregivers, home school educators, community librarians, community members, local business and organization leaders, literacy organizations, and advocacy groups all play an active role in promoting and supporting literacy within the community. Specific members of the community and family audience may vary depending on the context and demographics of the state or local community.

Overview of the Plan

The Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan establishes a guiding framework to enhance literacy instruction statewide. The plan targets all educational levels, emphasizing equity and inclusiveness while adhering to evidence-based practices. Central to the plan is the commitment to address and rectify persistent literacy disparities. It aims to unify efforts across various educational systems to ensure every student develops proficient literacy skills.
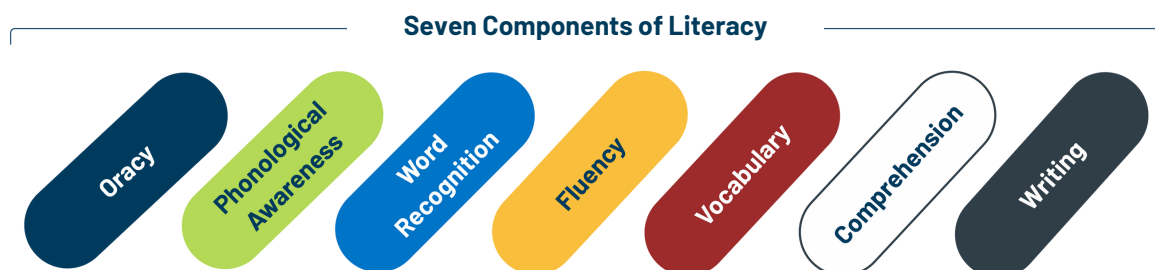
The plan focuses on three main goals:

GOAL 1: Every **student** receives high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction.

GOAL 2: Every **educator** is prepared and continuously supported to deliver high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction.

GOAL 3: Every **leader** is equipped to create, maintain, and sustain equitable conditions for high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction.

The Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan encourages local decision-making and adaptability, urging districts to customize their approaches based on specific needs and data within the local context. It's focus is on core, Tier 1 instruction, supplemented by discussions on interventions and differentiation strategies, targeting the literacy needs of Illinois students and working to close educational gaps.

The plan identifies Seven Components of Literacy at the core of every effective literacy program.

Seven Components of Literacy

Oracy · Phonological Awareness · Word Recognition · Fluency · Vocabulary · Comprehension · Writing

The plan contains six sections that guide readers through the careful consideration of creating and implementing a comprehensive literacy program that is systematically aligned.

The **Introduction** articulates the need based on data for a state literacy plan and outlines the vision, purpose, and objectives, serving as the foundational overview of the plan.

Section 1: Framework for Effective Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction establishes the core strategies for delivering impactful literacy instruction based on evidence-based practices, across the **Seven Components of Literacy**.

Section 2: Educator Professional Learning and Development details the continuous development and support of educators to ensure the delivery of high-quality literacy instruction, emphasizing educator preparation programs alignment with the plan.

Section 3: Effective Literacy Leadership focuses on the role of leaders in driving high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction, while advocating for collaboration, culturally responsive instruction, and data-informed decision-making.

Section 4: Support and Implementation Considerations highlights critical strategies for developing and implementing the literacy plan, through a workbook style format.

Section 5: Tools and Resources provides a list of resources and tools to aid districts, teachers, and families in implementing the literacy plan.

Engaging with the Plan

Below are general tips for engaging with the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan:

- **Support Local Schools**: Offer volunteer services, resources, or expertise to support literacy initiatives within local schools.
- **Promote Literacy Events**: Organize or participate in community-based literacy events, such as book drives, reading challenges, and literacy fairs.
- **Partner with Schools**: Establish partnerships between community organizations, businesses, and schools to support literacy development.
- **Advocate for Literacy**: Use your voice in community forums, social media, and local government meetings to advocate for literacy programs and resources.
- **Create a Literacy-Rich Home Environment**: Encourage reading and writing at home by providing access to books and writing materials.
- **Read Together**: Make reading a family activity. Sharing books with your children, regardless of their age, can help develop their literacy skills and foster a lifelong love of reading.
- **Support Homework and Reading Assignments**: Show interest in your child's schoolwork. Offer assistance and encourage your child to explore topics of interest through reading.
- **Use Community Resources**: Take advantage of the resources offered by local libraries, community centers, and online platforms.

Sample Roadmap through the Plan

The Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan incorporates various stakeholder roles that exist in education that each uniquely support literacy. Understanding your role offers insights into effective implementation and collaboration for positive student outcomes. The plan is designed to support varied uses and can easily be read by section and in varying order.

One sample roadmap to the Plan specifically is:

Workbook

The Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan includes workbook pages at the end of its sections, offering a hands-on approach to apply the concepts presented in the narrative. These workbooks combine reflection tools and action planning to enhance user engagement.

Designed to cater to varied audiences, the first three sections include practical implementation tips, reflective questions, and suggested next steps tailored to address the specific challenges and viewpoints of each audience group. The series is rounded off with **Section 4: Support and Implementation Considerations**, which provides essential guidance on preparing for literacy initiatives. Section 4 is most impactful when completed as a team with other local stakeholders engaged in the work of improving literacy instruction. **All workbook pages are included next in this guide**.

The overarching goal of these workbook pages is to promote a unified and informed literacy approach, encouraging users to align educational insights, evaluate strengths and weaknesses, confront biases, and prepare for future literacy efforts.

The following tips are ways you can maximize the benefits of these pages:

- **Create Family Literacy Nights**: Partner with schools to organize family literacy nights or even literacy plan walkthroughs. These events provide an engaging way for families to explore literacy together.

- **Develop Community Reading Challenges**: Libraries, community centers, and local organizations can spearhead reading challenges that encourage students and families to engage with books and literacy activities.

- **Incorporate Literacy into Daily Routines**: Encourage families to make literacy a part of their daily lives by utilizing tips and strategies from the workbook. This might include setting aside dedicated reading times, discussing books during meals, or incorporating writing into everyday activities. Families can share their experiences and tips with others through community forums or social media groups, creating a network of support and inspiration.

- **Engage Students in Peer Mentoring Programs**: Schools and community organizations can establish peer mentoring programs where older students support younger ones in developing literacy skills, using techniques from the workbook. This not only helps improve literacy outcomes but also fosters leadership skills among mentors and creates a supportive, collaborative learning environment.

NEXT ➡

Community & Family
WORKBOOK
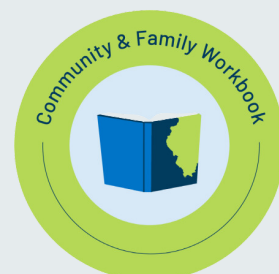
Community & Family Workbook

GOAL 1

Every **student** receives high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction.

Implementation Considerations

✓ Local literacy plans should be comprehensive, inclusive, and consider the needs and challenges of all students, including those with diverse learning needs, linguistic backgrounds, and abilities.

✓ Resources and support services should promote equitable access to literacy education for every student.

✓ Equitable resource distribution to schools, districts, and communities with the greatest literacy challenges ensure that all students have access to high-quality instruction and materials.

✓ Transparency in assessment practices, including reporting and using assessment data to inform instructional decisions, is an important component to instruction.

Next Steps

☐ Ask questions and be involved.

☐ Collaborate with local educators and stakeholders to develop supplementary literacy support programs tailored to local needs.

☐ Advocate for the inclusion of resources and strategies that promote accessibility and inclusivity.

☐ Analyze resource distribution within the community and identify disparities.

☐ Review literacy assessment methods and provide feedback on their fairness and relevance.

☐ Encourage the development of transparent reporting mechanisms that share assessment data with community and family partners to inform their involvement.

NOTES

Reflection Questions

1. How can the community play a role in supporting literacy initiatives?

2. What strategies can promote greater family involvement in literacy education?

3. What resources can be made available to parents and caregivers to support literacy at home?

4. How can partnerships with schools and districts enhance community literacy efforts?

5. Are there opportunities to engage in public advocacy for evidence-based literacy instruction?

GOAL 2

Every **educator** is prepared and continuously supported to deliver high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction.

Implementation Considerations

✓ Strategies that foster family engagement, such as literacy workshops, home reading programs, and regular communication between schools and parents to support children's literacy development should be encouraged and promoted.

✓ The allocation of resources, including funding, staffing, and materials, to support literacy education within a school, district, region, or state often indicate areas of strengths and weaknesses.

✓ Each community varies in its literacy awareness and engagement.

✓ Families, caregivers, and communities need support too.

Next Steps

☐ Provide learning opportunities for parents and community members to share the reasoning behind a literacy plan and provide ways to support their children at home.

☐ Participate in training sessions and workshops to better understand and support students with diverse needs.

☐ Collaborate with local schools, childcare centers, libraries, or after-school programs to create literacy-focused family engagement programs and share expectations on literacy skill development.

☐ Organize community literacy events, book drives, or reading programs.

☐ Establish parent and caregiver workshops on supporting literacy development.

☐ Attend school board meetings and advocate for strong literacy policies.

NOTES

Reflection Questions

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GOAL 3

Every **leader** is equipped to create, maintain, and sustain equitable conditions for high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction.

Implementation Considerations

✓ Local schools need to be explicit on their view surrounding literacy. Information regarding educational goals, initiatives, and expectations should be shared freely with informal learning partners in the community.

✓ Community and family partners play a vital role in supporting literacy beyond the school environment.

✓ Collaboration between schools, families, and community organizations enhances students' access to literacy resources.

✓ Engaging families in literacy activities strengthens the home-school connection.

Next Steps

☐ Collaborate with local policymakers and education authorities to advocate for fair resource allocation that ensures equitable access to literacy support.

☐ Establish a parent and caregiver support group or committee to facilitate engagement in literacy activities.

☐ Communicate regularly with the school to stay informed about literacy initiatives and opportunities for involvement.

☐ Establish literacy-focused community programs or initiatives.

☐ Collaborate with schools to host literacy-related events and workshops for families.

☐ Advocate for policies that promote literacy engagement within the community.

NOTES

Reflection Questions

1. How can our organization or group contribute to improving literacy outcomes for students?

2. What literacy resources and programs can we provide to support schools and families?

3. How can we empower parents and caregivers to become active participants in their child's literacy journey?

SECTION 4:
Support and Implementation Considerations

These workbook pages provide guidance in the form of suggestions for reflections and discussion at different levels to ensure that every system is aligned to promote literacy success by streamlining and focusing initiatives on literacy. These pages were designed with local literacy teams in mind, and are perhaps most dynamic when completed with a varied group of stakeholders in preparation to developing or revising a local literacy plan.

Additionally, consider the following suggestions:

- **Establish Clear Objectives and Roles**: Ensure that every participant understands the overarching goals of the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan and how it relates to your local context. Assign clear roles and responsibilities to group members based on their expertise, interests, and stakeholder perspectives.

- **Foster Open Communication and Collaboration**: Encourage an environment where all participants feel valued and empowered to share their perspectives. Emphasize the importance of constructive feedback and collaborative problem-solving. The diverse backgrounds of community members, families, and educators can offer a wealth of insights into practical, culturally relevant applications of the literacy plan.

- **Utilize the Workbook as a Guided Tool, Not a Checklist**: Approach the workbook as a framework for discussion and planning rather than a mere checklist to be completed. Engage deeply with each section, encouraging the group to discuss how the principles and strategies of the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan can be adapted and implemented in your local context. This involves critical thinking about the unique needs of your community and how the plan can address them.

- **Incorporate Data and Research**: Make informed decisions by incorporating local literacy data, research findings, and best practices into your discussions and planning. This can involve reviewing local literacy rates, school performance metrics, and community feedback. Use this data to identify priorities and tailor the literacy plan to address specific challenges and opportunities within your community.

- **Plan for Implementation and Monitoring**: Develop a clear action plan for implementing the literacy strategies discussed. This plan should include specific steps, timelines, responsible parties, and metrics for evaluating progress. Engaging varied stakeholders in this ongoing process ensures continued relevance and responsiveness to the community's needs.

The effectiveness of the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan in your local context depends on how well it is adapted to meet the unique needs of your community. By approaching the workbook with a mindset of collaboration, inclusivity, and evidence-based planning, your group can develop a comprehensive and effective local literacy plan.

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Reflection: What are the **strengths** of the school or district? Consider what school/district/state data suggests and challenges faced by current literacy programs.

Guiding Questions:

1. How can **strengths** be built upon and challenges addressed?

2. What **evidence-based instructional strategies** need to be incorporated?

3. What programs does the school/district have in place to support the needs of various **learners**, including learners who are from varying cultural backgrounds, multilingual learners, high-incidence special needs learners, advanced learners, and learners from the range of ages and grade levels?

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Reflection: What patterns or trends can be observed through **student performance data** (examining a range of years/school level/district/state)? Close attention should be paid to the lowest performing sub-groups of students, as their performance may reflect most clearly on the strength of the school/district's literacy instruction. Disaggregation of assessment data should be completed by, but not limited to, the following categories:

- Grade levels and cohorts, as appropriate.
- Student demographic identifiers: race/ethnicity, low income, homelessness, migrant status.
- Special programming enrollment: Individualized Education Program/504 Plan students, English learner designations, Title 1 service identification, and identification for advanced learner programs.

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Guiding Questions:

1. How can this data inform **literacy improvement** efforts?

2. How do assessment tools align across grade levels to **build** a coherent system?

3. What type of **data** is being collected at each grade level?

4. How can this data **inform** literacy improvement efforts?

5. Does the data **align** with what we know about literacy development?

6. Are benchmark assessments evaluating **key literacy components** for each grade level?

7. Are these assessments identifying students in need or evaluating **student growth** in literacy components?

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Reflection: Who are the key **stakeholders** in the literacy initiative of the school or district?

Guiding Questions:

1. How can the school/district involve these stakeholders in **shaping** the local literacy plan?

2. How can the school/district communicate the process of instructional shifts in **teaching** literacy and what considerations will be made for the building towards buy-in of the local literacy plan?

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Reflection: What is envisioned for literacy experiences in the school/district and how will these lead to improved **student outcomes**?

Guiding Question:

1. How can a clear **vision and mission** guide the local literacy plan?

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Reflection: What specific **literacy goals** are most critical for students in your school/district?

Guiding Question:

1. How will progress be measured toward the **achievement** of these goals?

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Reflection: Who should be included on the literacy **leadership team**?

Guiding Questions:

1. How can **diverse expertise** benefit literacy efforts in your school/district?

2. How will outside expertise/experience be identified/used to augment/support the literacy **leadership team** in its work?

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Reflection: How well does the current curriculum **align** with state standards?

Guiding Questions:

1. What changes or enhancements are needed for **alignment**?

2. How will the alignment provide insight into necessary professional learning tied to **improved outcomes** for students?

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Reflection: Are there evidence-based instructional **strategies** that can be incorporated?

Guiding Question:

1. How can teachers use these strategies to **engage students** in order to build upon student assets and interests?

Reflection: What assessment tools will help track **student growth**?

Guiding Question:

1. How, when, and in what form can assessment **data** guide instructional adjustments?

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Reflection: How can **local resources** (e.g., considerations for time, money, or space) be allocated strategically for maximum impact?

Guiding Question:

1. What **resources** are essential for successful implementation of a local literacy plan?

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Reflection: What **professional learning** opportunities do local educators need in order to deliver high-quality evidence-based literacy instruction? How can these opportunities be built over time?

Guiding Questions:

1. How will ongoing training **support** the local literacy plan?

2. What is the cadence for **training**?

3. How might the school/district differentiate **training** based upon staff need, expertise, or topic?

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Reflection: How can the school/district actively **involve** families and the community in literacy?

Guiding Questions:

1. What strategies will enhance family and community **partnerships** to strengthen the importance of literacy?

2. What **connections** can be made with school and community librarians to support literacy?

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Reflection: How will the school/district ensure transparent and **effective communication** and easy access to providing feedback?

Guiding Question:

1. What channels and **methods** will be most effective to ensure that all who wish to share perspective are able to do so?

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Reflection: How will local/district/state data be utilized to inform **decisions** throughout the implementation of the local literacy plan? What is the cadence in which data will be considered?

Guiding Question:

1. What processes need to be in place to ensure **data-driven decision-making** to guide the implementation of the local literacy plan?

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Reflection: How often will the effectiveness of the plan be **evaluated**?

Guiding Questions:

1. What **indicators** will be used to measure success?

2. How will these **indicators** be identified?

3. How do the **metrics** tie to the purpose of the local literacy plan?

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Reflection: How will the local plan be **adapted** and refined as needed?

Guiding Question:

1. How can flexibility contribute to **long-term success**?

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Reflection: What **key elements** must be included in the final plan?
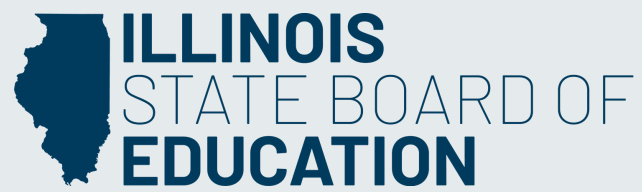
Guiding Question:

1. How can schools/districts ensure the plan is **comprehensive**?

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Reflection: What is a realistic timeline for **executing** the plan?

Guiding Questions:

1. How will you **prioritize** tasks to meet the goals?

2. What smaller timeline **goals** are necessary for executing the plan?

3. How will the school/district continually support individuals who join the district throughout the implementation timeline to ensure they are adequately equipped with the necessary resources, training, and mentorship to seamlessly integrate into the educational environment and contribute to the district's **goals and objectives**?

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