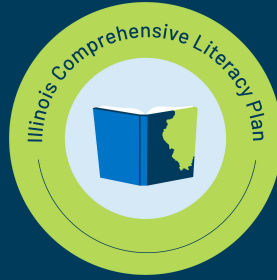


READER'S GUIDE

2024 Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan



DISTRICT LEADERS



Reader's Guide: District Leaders



This guide is designed as a companion to the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan to support district leaders in leading their districts in efficiently navigating through the plan and adopting evidence-based literacy practices. Specifically formulated for those in district-wide leadership positions, it features strategic advice, suggests readings that are pertinent to their unique leadership duties, and includes workbook pages for application. This resource is intended to empower district leaders to elevate literacy instruction and promote equitable learning conditions, ensuring literacy success for every student.

Guide Audience

District leaders are school boards, superintendents, deputy superintendents, curriculum directors, special education directors, world language and bilingual coordinators, and college and career leaders, etc., who have the authority to promote new policies unique to the district, streamline initiatives for this set of schools, and monitor implementation of state and federal policy.

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:

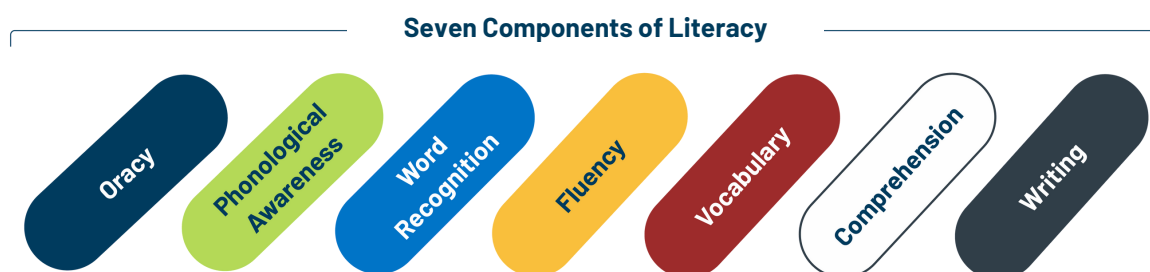
GOAL 1: Every **student** receives high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction.

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.



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



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 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 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 as a district leader:

- **Align District Initiatives with the Plan:** Ensure that districtwide initiatives and policies are in harmony with the goals of the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan.
- **Leverage Data to Inform Decisions:** Collect and analyze literacy data districtwide to assess initiatives, guide resource allocation, and inform professional development. Utilize the **District Literacy Asset Mapping Template** included in the **Getting Started Toolkit** to start this work.
- **Ensure Equitable Access:** Advocate for policies and practices that guarantee equitable access to high-quality literacy instruction for all students, particularly those from underserved or marginalized communities. Address barriers to literacy success and allocate resources where they are most needed to close achievement gaps.
- **Support Innovation and Flexibility:** Provide flexibility and support for schools to adapt the literacy plan to meet their unique needs and contexts, fostering creative approaches to literacy instruction.
- **Engage Stakeholders:** Actively involve a wide range of stakeholders, including families and community organizations in literacy initiatives.
- **Monitor and Evaluate Impact:** Monitor and review local literacy initiatives impact, celebrating successes and adjusting strategies for continuous improvement.

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 for district leaders is:

Introduction.....8-21

- **Why is This Plan Necessary?** on pages 10 and 11
 - Utilize the [Illinois School Report Card](#) to layer Illinois Assessment of Readiness data with other existing local data.
- **Illinois' Guiding Values for Literacy** on pages 12 and 13
 - Examine local literacy initiatives for evidence of these values.

Section 1: Framework for Effective Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction.....22-102

- **Seven Components of Literacy** on pages 33 through 61
 - Examine local literacy practices for evidence of each component. For a basic primer on how these skills are developed and interrelated, read [The Development of a Reader](#) on pages 26 through 32.
- **Multi-Tiered System of Supports and Literacy** on pages 70 through 76
 - Compare the local MTSS structure to the information shared within this section
- **Goal 1 Workbook: District Leaders** on pages 84 through 85
 - Reflect and review implementation considerations, next steps, and reflection questions.

Section 2: Educator Professional Learning and Development.....103-129

- **Educator Preparation and Training** on pages 105 through 109
 - Brainstorm ways your local district can build strong partnerships with higher education.
- **Professional Learning for In-Service Educators** on pages 109 through 112
 - Consider the various ways to promote further professional learning on evidence-based literacy practices.
- **Goal 2 Workbook: District Leaders** on pages 121 through 122
 - Reflect and review implementation considerations, next steps, and reflection questions.

Section 3: Effective Literacy Leadership.....130-151

- **Strategic Leadership in Literacy** on pages 132 through 132
 - Reflect on how district leadership actions align with information described here.
- **Leadership Levers to Promote Literacy Success** on pages 133 through 134
 - Consider the levers described and how they apply to your local context.
- **Goal 3 Workbook: District Leaders** on pages 143 through 144
 - Reflect and review implementation considerations, next steps, and reflection questions.

Section 4: Support and Implementation Considerations.....152-173

- **Local Funding Considerations** on page 153
 - Consider how the information presented here can be expanded to your district.

Section 5: Tools and Resources.....174-192

Workbook

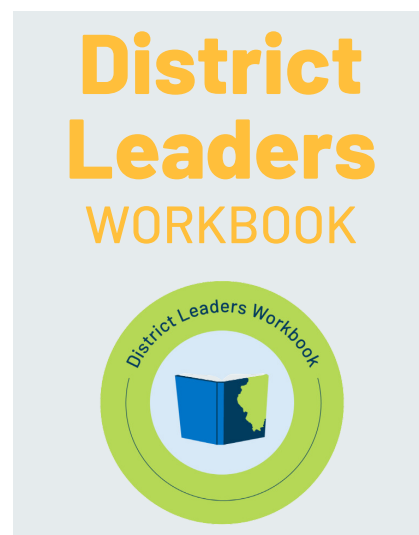
The **Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan** includes workbook pages at the end of its sections, offering a hands-on approach to apply the concepts presented in the narrative. These workbooks combine reflection tools and action planning to enhance user engagement.

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. **These 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 district leaders can maximize the benefits of these pages:

- **Align Literacy Initiatives Across Schools:** Work to ensure that literacy initiatives are consistently implemented across all schools in your district. Use the workbook as a tool to create a unified district-wide literacy plan that includes clear goals, strategies, and measures of success.
- **Leverage Data for Strategic Planning:** Utilize districtwide data to inform the development and adjustment of literacy programs. This involves not only analyzing IAR data but also looking at classroom assessments, student work samples, and teacher feedback. Use this data to identify areas of need, allocate resources effectively, and track the progress of literacy initiatives.
- **Promote Equity in Literacy Education:** Ensure that all students, regardless of their background, have access to high-quality literacy resources and instruction. Identify and address disparities within your district, targeting resources and support to schools and populations that are historically underserved or at risk.
- **Foster Innovation and Continuous Improvement:** Support pilot programs and research initiatives that explore evidence-based methods of teaching reading and writing. Create a culture of continuous improvement by regularly reviewing the impact of these innovations and scaling successful practices across the district.



GOAL 1

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

Implementation Considerations

- ✓ All districts, regardless of grades served, need to consider how a literacy plan could help improve their student achievement.
- ✓ District literacy plans should consider the local context of student data to establish a plan that will be beneficial for all learners.
- ✓ Student data should guide instruction throughout the year as part of the district assessment plan and MTSS system.
- ✓ Identifying quality curriculum and intervention materials will be necessary.
- ✓ Curriculum may look different for different grade bands. The district needs to consider how to support all its educators in the best way possible.

Next Steps

- Identify quality curriculum as a top priority. Review current curriculum and implementation using an approved rubric.
- Assess year-over-year data to understand student achievement and identify success in schools. Disaggregate data by race, language learners, and diverse learners.
- Implement assessment systems to identify students in need of intervention.
- Avoid excessive testing and value diverse assessment methods.
- Identify criteria to determine if students need interventions in accordance with MTSS.

NOTES

Reflection Questions

1. What do the current structures and data indicate about the district's beliefs and the implementation of support for literacy instruction?
2. How can data be utilized to present a comprehensive overview of the reading proficiency of all students?
3. What notable achievements can be identified within the district's practices?
4. What evidence-based strategies are being employed successfully and which strategies are being excluded?
5. What resources are allocated at each grade level to ensure that all students can read and receive the necessary support?

GOAL 2

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

Implementation Considerations

- ✓ Equitable access to evidence-based literacy resources and training across the district is essential.
- ✓ Professional learning and curriculum may look different for different grade bands.
- ✓ District-wide literacy standards and benchmarks should guide professional learning.
- ✓ Student literacy outcome should be analyzed to guide instruction and professional learning.
- ✓ An effective feedback cycle should support professional learning.
- ✓ Collaboration to align literacy initiatives with regional and state leaders increases effectiveness of local efforts.

Next Steps

- Allocate funding and resources for district-wide literacy initiatives.
- Utilize state and national professional organizations for support to secure high quality professional learning.
- Focus on evidence-based practices for literacy instruction.
- Provide training on supporting implementation, evaluating instructional materials, and monitoring fidelity of use.
- Implement a data management system for tracking literacy outcomes.
- Provide ongoing coaching and support to schools for effective literacy instruction.
- Engage in regular communication and collaboration with regional and state leaders on literacy initiatives.

NOTES

Reflection Questions

1. How are educators involved in the planning process and how is feedback obtained from local stakeholders by school districts?
2. How does the district support and monitor school level implementation of evidence-based literacy practices? How is professional learning offered to facilitate the implementation of the evidence-based curriculum?
3. Do our district literacy standards align with comprehensive literacy plan?
4. How can we provide consistent access to literacy resources and training across all schools?
5. What data are we collecting to assess district-wide literacy outcomes?
6. Are there opportunities for collaboration with regional and state leaders to strengthen literacy efforts?

GOAL 3

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

Implementation Considerations

- ✓ District leaders should consider developing a feedback loop for checking in and monitoring implementation.
- ✓ Teachers need to be deeply and meaningfully engaged in district planning work.
- ✓ Literacy is the bedrock of achievement. The district must take bold steps to align district efforts so schools are not unnecessarily overwhelmed with a myriad of different initiatives.
- ✓ Data should be used to signal improvements and separated from measures of accountability.
- ✓ Engaging teachers and district leaders collaboratively in the work will facilitate transparency and connect closely to the daily work of the schools.
- ✓ District leaders shape policies and allocate resources to support literacy initiatives across schools.
- ✓ Collaboration with schools and communities is essential for district-wide literacy success.
- ✓ Data-driven decision-making and assessment are key components of effective district leadership in literacy.

Next Steps

- Build leadership capacity within schools.
- Establish principal support groups.
- Consider piloting implementation to learn what works best.
- Initiate a Request for Proposal process with curriculum providers.
- Collaborate with school leaders to develop district-wide literacy benchmarks and goals.
- Establish regular communication channels for sharing best practices and successes.
- Allocate funding and resources strategically to support district-wide literacy initiatives.

NOTES

Reflection Questions

1. Where is overlap evident in the current systems and structures?
2. What demonstrates effectiveness in our current systems and structures and what can be eliminated?
3. How are openness and transparency demonstrated in the actions of district leaders?
4. How can I align district policies and resources to support literacy from pre-K through 12th grade?
5. What partnerships can be forged with schools, regional leaders, and community partners to strengthen literacy efforts?
6. How can I ensure equitable access to literacy resources and opportunities for all students?

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.

**Assessing Your Current
Literacy Landscape**

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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?

Setting Clear Goals
**Defining Your Vision
and Mission**

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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?

Aligned Supports
**Assessment and Progress
Monitoring**

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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?

Implementation Considerations
**Family and Community
Engagement**

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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**?

Continuous Improvement
**End Considerations for the
Local Literacy Plan**

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

Guiding Question:

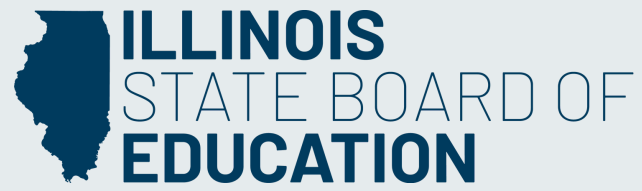
1. How can schools/districts ensure the plan is **comprehensive**?

Print me!

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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