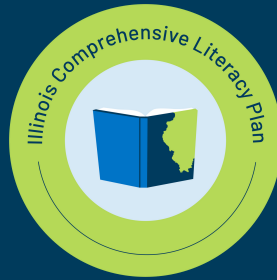


# READER'S GUIDE

## 2024 Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan



EDUCATOR  
PREPARATION



# Reader's Guide: Educator Preparation



This guide is designed as a companion to the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan to support those involved in educator preparation in integrating and applying evidence-based literacy practices in their programs. It details essential strategies, recommends readings aligned with preparatory roles, and incorporates workbook pages for practical application. This resource is aimed at empowering those in educator preparation to enhance future educators' literacy instruction capabilities and to support equitable learning environments for every student's literacy success.

## Guide Audience

The staff and faculty of educator preparation programs support aspiring teachers across diverse disciplines, seeking to enhance their proficiency in fostering literacy skills in students. These programs offer the first exposure to evidence based practices and prepare future educators with the necessary knowledge of literacy development to be successful in the classroom.

## 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:

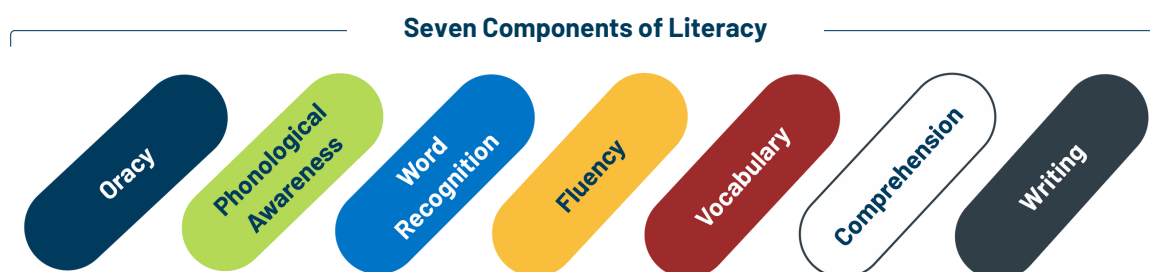
**GOAL 1:** Every **student** receives high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction.

**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:

- **Focus on Evidence-Based Practices:** Ensure that teacher candidates are knowledgeable about current research and effective practices in literacy education.
- **Integrate Literacy Across the Curriculum:** Coach aspiring teachers to incorporate literacy instruction into all subject areas, emphasizing the importance of literacy skills in every discipline.
- **Cultivate Cultural Competence:** Prepare educators to recognize and respect the linguistic and cultural diversity of students. Teach strategies for making literacy instruction relevant and accessible to all students.
- **Enhance Digital Literacy Skills:** Equip future teachers with the skills to integrate technology into literacy instruction effectively.
- **Emphasize Early Literacy Development:** Highlight the critical importance of early literacy skills in preschool and elementary education.
- **Prepare for Differentiation and Intervention:** Teach candidates how to assess literacy needs and implement differentiated instruction and targeted interventions to support all learners.
- **Foster a Reflective Practice:** Encourage aspiring teachers to reflect on their instructional practices, student outcomes, and professional growth.
- **Engage with Families and Communities:** Prepare teachers to communicate effectively with families and engage the community in supporting student literacy development, building partnerships that enhance learning outside the classroom.

# Literacy and Higher Education

[Public Act 103-0402](#) amends the Illinois School Code with the goal of elevating literacy instruction in Illinois. The act aims to significantly improve literacy rates among students by fostering an environment that supports reading and writing proficiency. This initiative not only targets academic success but also seeks to address broader societal challenges associated with low literacy levels.

The Act imposes mandates on the Illinois State Board of Education to establish a robust literacy framework, enhance educator learning and development in evidence-based literacy instruction, and revise the elementary education content area knowledge test (grades 1-6). By July 1, 2026, the updated test will encompass elements of bilingualism, biliteracy, oral language development, foundational literacy skills, and appropriate comprehension skills. Passing scores will be determined based on a formal standard-setting process, but candidates will not be required to meet a specific subscore in language and literacy. The Illinois State Board of Education is also required to compile and disclose the number of candidates taking the test and those passing the language and literacy section from each preparation program, aiming to enhance transparency in educator qualifications. The content test is currently required prior to student teaching.

## Mandates and Deadlines

**January 31, 2024** | Develop and adopt a comprehensive literacy plan

**July 1, 2024** | Release resources for districts

- Literacy evaluation rubric
- Literacy plan template
- Guidance for literacy coaches

**January 1, 2025** | Develop and make available professional learning for educators aligned to the literacy plan

**July 1, 2026** | Measure level of educator preparation

- Language and literacy subscore on elementary content knowledge tests
- Publish test participation and language and literacy pass rates by program

Program Enrollment	Estimated Student Teaching *	Elementary Content Test Required
Fall 2024	Jan 1, 2026	Current (305)
Spring 2025	August 1, 2026	Current (305) or New starting 7/1/26
Fall 2025	January 1, 2027	Current (305) or New starting 7/1/26
Spring 2026	August 1, 2027	Current (305) until 6/30/27 New after 7/1/27
Fall 2026	Jan 1, 2028	New

*\*The dates in the table are meant to be used as an example. Institutions should adjust based on their program student teaching dates. Passing scores on content tests do not expire.*

Contact Educator Effectiveness at ISBE with questions by emailing [preparation@isbe.net](mailto:preparation@isbe.net)

## 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 educator preparation is:

### **Introduction.....8-21**

- **Why is This Plan Necessary?** on pages 10 and 11
  - Identify existing statewide data related to literacy.
- **Illinois' Guiding Values for Literacy** on pages 12 and 13
  - Examine statewide 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
  - Align coursework to cover each component.
- **Additional Instructional Factors** on pages 62 through 70
  - Consider how these factors are embedded in educator preparation programs.

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

- **Educator Preparation and Training** on pages 105 through 109
  - Analyze how your actions align supports the preparation and training of educators.
- **Professional Learning for In-Service Educators** on pages 109 through 112
  - Evaluate how educator preparation programs contribute to the ongoing professional learning for in service teachers.

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

- **Foundations and Responsibilities of Effective Literacy Leadership** on pages 131 and 132
  - Align your role with the important responsibilities outlined.
- **Strategic Leadership in Literacy** on page 132
  - Reflect on how leadership actions in educator preparation 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 role.

### **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. Included in this reader's guide are newly developed workbook pages specifically for educator preparation.

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 educator preparation can maximize the benefits of these pages:

- **Integrate Workbook Content into Coursework:** Faculty members can incorporate sections of the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan and the workbook directly into their curriculum, making it a required or supplementary reading for courses related to literacy instruction. Assignments can be designed around the workbook's reflection questions and action plans, encouraging students to apply these concepts in theoretical lesson plans or during student teaching experiences.
- **Use Workbook as a Basis for Professional Development Workshops:** Organize workshops for educator preparation faculty and staff that delve into the workbook's content, focusing on how its strategies can be integrated into teacher preparation programs. These workshops can serve as a platform for sharing best practices, discussing challenges in literacy education, and exploring innovative teaching methods.
- **Foster Collaborative Learning Communities:** Create learning communities among faculty, staff, and pre-service teachers that focus on literacy instruction. These communities can meet regularly to discuss sections of the workbook, share experiences from teaching and field placements, and collaboratively develop literacy instruction strategies. Such communities encourage ongoing learning and reflection, and the collaborative atmosphere can generate new ideas and approaches that improve literacy instruction across the program.
- **Organize Interdisciplinary Literacy Seminars:** Host seminars that bring together faculty from different disciplines within the educator preparation program to discuss the integration of literacy across subject areas, using the workbook as a foundational resource. These seminars can highlight the importance of literacy in all content areas, from math and science to social studies and physical education. Facilitate discussions on how to incorporate literacy strategies into diverse teaching contexts, encouraging cross-disciplinary collaboration.

## GOAL 1

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

### Implementation Considerations

- ✓ Educator preparation programs must integrate evidence-based literacy instruction into their curricula, ensuring future teachers are equipped with effective teaching strategies.
- ✓ Programs should provide ongoing professional development for faculty and staff focused on literacy education, equipping them to better prepare teacher candidates.
- ✓ Partnerships with local schools and educational resources should be strengthened to offer real-world teaching experiences that complement academic learning.
- ✓ A commitment to equity is essential, preparing future educators to meet the diverse literacy needs of all students, especially those most in need of support.

### Next Steps

- Regularly review and update teacher preparation curricula to reflect the latest in literacy research and effective teaching practices.
- Enhance faculty and staff development in evidence-based literacy strategies and equitable teaching practices through targeted professional learning.
- Foster connections with local educational initiatives and resources to enrich the preparation of teacher candidates.
- Emphasize the importance of equity in literacy instruction, ensuring teacher candidates are prepared to support all students.

### NOTES

### Reflection Questions

1. How can educator preparation programs ensure their curricula reflect the latest evidence-based practices in literacy instruction?
2. In what ways can programs enhance faculty and staff capacity to prepare future teachers for effective literacy instruction?
3. What local or regional organizations could be partnered with to support the literacy preparation of teacher candidates?
4. How can educator preparation programs address the diverse literacy needs of all students, including those from marginalized and disenfranchised communities?
5. What challenges might programs face in integrating evidence-based literacy practices and how can these be overcome?



## GOAL 2

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

### Implementation Considerations

- ✓ Identify regional champions of literacy and provide the necessary professional learning for students to observe evidence-based literacy practices during program components .
- ✓ Programs need to be proactive and strategic when designing and implementing literacy support to ensure students have the appropriate opportunities to engage in evidence-based literacy practices.
- ✓ Professional learning opportunities in evidence-based literacy practices should be encouraged and promoted to all teacher educators.
- ✓ Teacher educators should identify and monitor literacy outcomes and trends impacting educator preparation program outcomes.

### Next Steps

- Develop professional learning opportunities for educators .
- Share messaging plans with program leaders to help maintain a consistent focus on literacy.
- Establish higher education literacy coordination committees, conferences, or workshops.
- Create a platform for teacher educators to share effective literacy strategies.
- Share strategies for analyzing and monitoring literacy outcomes and trends impacting educator preparation program outcomes.
- Advocate for policy changes that promote evidence-based literacy instruction at the course and program level.

### NOTES

### Reflection Questions

1. How can coordination of educator preparation programs enhance the impact of literacy initiatives?
2. Are there policy barriers at the program level that need to be addressed to support evidence-based literacy instruction?
3. How will teacher educators sustain ongoing professional learning?
4. How can we ensure the exchange of successful literacy practices among educator preparation programs?
5. What data should we monitor to assess progress with program initiatives?

## GOAL 3

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

### Implementation Considerations

- ✓ Develop and integrate curriculum components that focus on leadership in literacy education, emphasizing the creation and maintenance of equitable instructional environments.
- ✓ Ensure that training on equity, diversity, and inclusion is central in the preparation of educational leaders, preparing them to address disparities and foster inclusivity in literacy instruction.
- ✓ Establish partnerships with schools and educational organizations to provide practical leadership experiences, focusing on equity in literacy programs.
- ✓ Integrate current research and policy discussions into the program, enabling future leaders to understand and navigate the complexities of implementing equitable literacy instruction.

### Next Steps

- Create opportunities for aspiring leaders to engage in practicums or internships focused on literacy leadership within diverse educational settings.
- Develop and maintain active alumni networks that provide ongoing support, mentorship, and professional development opportunities in literacy leadership.
- Encourage and facilitate community engagement projects that allow future leaders to work directly on improving literacy outcomes in underserved areas.
- Host regular professional development workshops and seminars for faculty, staff, and students on evolving topics related to equity, literacy, and leadership.

### NOTES

### Reflection Questions

1. How does the current curriculum prepare future leaders to create equitable conditions for literacy instruction?
2. In what ways can we enhance our partnerships to provide real-world leadership experiences in diverse and underserved educational settings?
3. What steps can we take to ensure our faculty and staff are continuously updated on best practices in literacy leadership and equity?
4. How can we better support our graduates in their ongoing development as leaders in literacy education, particularly in fostering equitable conditions?
5. What mechanisms do we have in place to assess the effectiveness of our leadership preparation in terms of graduates' ability to implement and sustain equitable literacy practices?

## 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**

**Print me!**

**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?

**Print me!**

**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**?

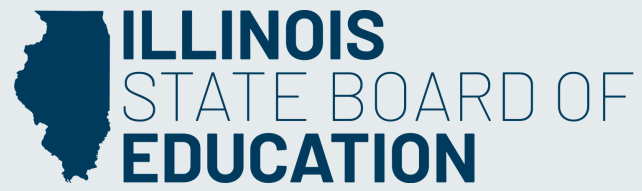
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**Reflection:** What is a realistic timeline for **executing** the plan?

**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**?





[isbe.net/LiteracyPlan](https://isbe.net/LiteracyPlan)