

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: ILLINOIS COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY PLAN

The Illinois State Board of Education prioritizes literacy as essential for student achievement and successful engagement in society. The Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan outlines a strategy to enhance literacy instruction statewide, ensuring access to developmentally appropriate and evidence-based instructional practices. It addresses the critical need for literacy improvement, linking it to significant social outcomes and the necessity for focused, equitable instruction.



### Necessity of the Plan

The necessity of a state literacy plan is underscored by [PA 103-0402](#), which highlights literacy as fundamental for both individual and societal well-being, linking low literacy to inequality and economic challenges. With half of Illinois' third graders not meeting English language arts standards—a decline from pre-pandemic levels—and a significant portion of fourth graders scoring below basic reading proficiency, the data reveals a pressing need for systematic, evidence-based literacy instruction. Addressing these gaps is vital for equitable education, supporting students' future success, and strengthening community and democratic health.

### Summary of Goals and the Plan's Components

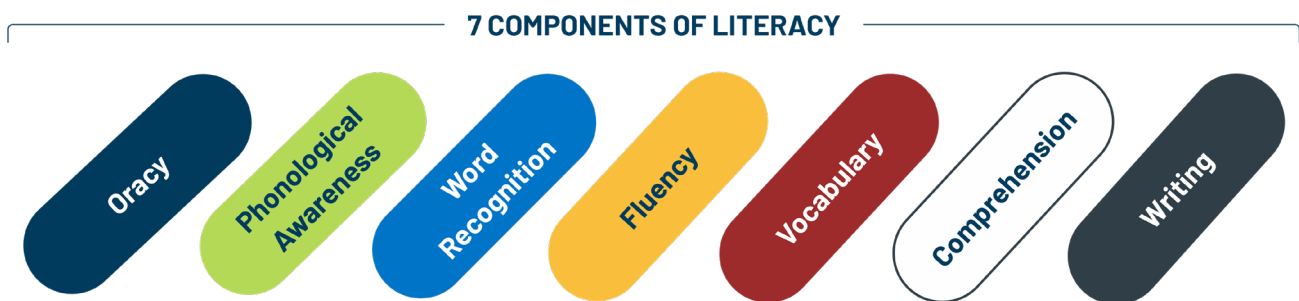
The plan aims to enhance literacy skills throughout Illinois with three primary goals:

**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.

It underscores the importance of the Seven Components of 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 contains the following sections:

## **Introduction**

The introduction defines literacy as a critical priority and outlines the plan's purpose: to improve literacy skills across Illinois. It sets three goals: ensure high-quality literacy instruction, support educators with necessary resources, and create equitable literacy environments. The plan emphasizes adaptability and data-driven decision-making, encouraging districts to tailor their literacy approaches to local needs.

## **Section 1: Framework for Effective Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**

This section delineates the foundations of high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction, highlighting the importance of explicit, systematic teaching methods. It connects the **Seven Components of Literacy** to instructional practices, while addressing additional factors such as handwriting, 21st century skills, support for diverse learners, and Multi-Tiered System of Supports for literacy interventions.

## **Section 2: Educator Professional Learning and Development**

Section 2 focuses on aligning literacy professional learning from Educator Preparation Programs through opportunities for in-service educators. It advocates for differentiated approaches to meet educators' diverse needs, while stressing the importance of evidence-based practices and data-driven program evaluations.

## **Section 3: Effective Literacy Leadership**

This section underscores the importance of leadership in fostering high-quality literacy instruction. It provides a framework for leaders to support educators, engage with families and communities, and emphasize equity. The section encourages data-informed decision-making and interdisciplinary collaboration, aiming to create a unified literacy vision across different leadership levels.

## **Section 4: Support and Implementation Considerations**

Section 4 serves as a reflective guide for aligning educational systems to improve literacy for all students. It discusses strategies for district-level literacy initiatives, fostering a reflective practice culture, and addressing equity to ensure literacy proficiency for students from all backgrounds.

## **Section 5: Tools and Resources**

The final section provides a compilation of tools and resources to support districts, educators, and families in enhancing literacy education. It emphasizes the plan's adaptability to local needs and the ongoing nature of this resource list, which will be updated on the [Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan webpage](#).

## **Implementation Phases**

The implementation's four phases progressively build towards comprehensive literacy improvement:

**PHASE 1** → Awareness and Engagement (January 24, 2024- July 1, 2024)

**PHASE 2** → Data Literacy and Support for Local Plan Development (July 1, 2024 - January 1, 2025)

**PHASE 3** → Professional Learning for Educators (January 1, 2025 - July 1, 2026)

**PHASE 4** → Strategic Alignment with Educator Preparation Programs (July 1, 2026, and onwards)

## **Conclusion**

The Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan is an ambitious initiative that aspires not only to address the current literacy needs of students across the state but also to lay a strong foundation for future educational success. By emphasizing evidence-based instruction and allowing for local adaptation, the plan demonstrates a commitment to improving literacy outcomes for all students and fostering a society where equitable education is the norm.