




**ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**  
**October 18, 2023**

**To:** Illinois State Board of Education

**From:** Dr. Tony Sanders, State Superintendent of Education   
Dr. Kimako Patterson, Chief of Staff   
Jason Helfer, Ph.D., Chief Officer of Instructional Education 

**Agenda Topic:** Illinois Literacy Plan – Revisions Update

**Expected Outcome:** Board Presentation item

**Materials:** Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan – 2<sup>nd</sup> draft

**Staff Contact(s):** Dr. Jennifer Kirmes, Executive Director of Teaching & Learning  
Dr. Erica Thieman, Director of Standards & Instruction  
Kirsten Parr, Project Lead for Standards & Instruction

**Purpose of the Agenda Item**

This document describes revisions made to the first draft of the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan based on feedback received between June 21, 2023 and September 6, 2023 through the Listening Tour, Focus Groups, and comment form.

***General Changes***

- Revised and clarified the purpose and goals, aligning the sections to match the focus of each goal.
- Revised each section to include the most relevant information and moved information to the more appropriate section as needed. This included adding audience specific reflection questions to the end of each section.
- Worked closely with the graphic designer to design all sections of the plan for better readability.
- Included specific references to state learning and preparation standards.
- Included and emphasized the role and contributions of parents, families, and home environment.
- Connected and emphasized the importance of biliteracy and its benefits.
- Adjusted for the use of asset-based language, including specific recommendations to use multilingual students instead of English learners, where appropriate.
- Included additional considerations for students who are neurodivergent.
- Included a resource to include key terms and definitions as utilized in the plan.
- Included references and links to existing ISBE programs, departments, and resources, where appropriate.

***Vision & Purpose***

- Revisions completed to clarify the purpose, identify the goals, differentiate audience roles, and provide background information to guide the reader as they engage with the greater plan.
- Refined the definition of literacy to be comprehensive yet focused on reading and writing, Emphasis was also placed during revision on the importance of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, media literacy, reading independence, and the importance of cultivating a joy of reading.
- Included an acknowledgment of key terms used throughout the document that were identified in feedback as confusing, including providing a clear description of evidence based and aligning that definition to the criteria utilized by other ISBE departments.

***Effective Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction***

- Revised this section to highlight a wider array of student groups.
- Adjusted and improved the graphic on page 4, aligning the content to the progression of skills, expanded the component areas to include writing and oracy, improving the readability of the table, extending concepts into additional developmental bands, addressing elements missing from the graphic, and providing additional emphasis and detail about areas of instruction.
- Made revisions regarding the importance of effective writing instruction and notably inclusion and discussion of encoding/spelling.

- Expanded and extended discussion of fluency practices.
- Adjusted the vocabulary section to include morphology.
- Expanded the comprehension section to mirror the level of content included for foundational skills.
- Adjusted applicable content previously identified as specific to English learners or multilingual students to apply to all students, providing greater clarity to what all students need first, then addressing consideration of additional necessary supports.
- Connections to handwriting and writing, including encoding, were expanded.
- The Developmental Trajectories for Literacy were heavily revised for clarity and expanded into more one-page documents for ease of access and use of the information. Resources were created specifically for each grade band/level to further help identify appropriate literacy experiences for varied age ranges.
- References to Every Student Succeeds Act were included.
- Additional information regarding assessments in Illinois were included in the Tools and Resources section.
- Information for professional development was expanded and included in Sections 2 and 3 to further align with those goals.
- Added additional background information on reading, and the process of learning to read; visuals were added to this section.
- Removed the reference to the 20<sup>th</sup> percentile, noting individual districts should identify local norms.
- Adjusted the information on Multi-Tiered System of Supports to further clarify support to students.

### ***Educator Professional Learning, Development, and Support***

- Expanded the discussion of professional learning to include a focus on all educators, including administrators and specialists.
- Provided examples of practices that are not in alignment with evidence-based literacy practices.
- Integrated more frequent references to cultural relevance and responsiveness in professional learning.
- Updated WIDA reference to the WIDA framework and not solely the Can Do Descriptors.
- Reorganized section and expanded, as needed, to uniquely address pre-service educator professional learning needs and in-service educator professional learning needs.
- Included considerations for aligning teacher preparation programs to the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan.

### ***Framework for Effective Leadership***

- Adjusted the section to more closely align with the content of the section and guidance to leaders.
- Developed streamlined resources for each stakeholder group, with focused reflection questions and next steps in a workbook style format that appears throughout the plan.
- Reversed the order of the section to provide guidance to stakeholder groups that have most direct instructional interactions with students and moving outward.
- Created a new section following the leadership section that provides two reflection questions per topic area that will assist schools in developing a local literacy plan.

### ***Tools and Resources***

- Information within this section was reorganized to align with each section of the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan to assist readers in locating resources.
- Included a resource to include key terms used within the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan.
- Included additional resources and refined previously included information to align with the information in the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan.