

# Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan FAQ



## Is this plan a mandate?

The Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan is mandated by [Public Act 103-0402, which required](#) ISBE to produce such a plan and make it available to districts as a resource by January 31, 2024. The plan was drafted and revised through an extensive stakeholder engagement process, which resulted in multiple drafts and revisions to respond to feedback that was received. The final [plan](#) was adopted on January 24, 2024, and is provided as a guidance document to districts.

There is no mandate in legislation for districts to utilize the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan.



## When do districts need to submit local literacy plans?

There is no requirement for districts to submit local literacy plans to ISBE.



## My school is about to purchase new curriculum. What guidance is available?

The ISBE Standards and Instruction Department developed the [Curriculum Evaluation Tool](#) for statewide implementation in school year 2021-22. The legislation requires ISBE to provide a literacy-specific rubric, which will be available by July 1, 2024.



## Will there be a specific list of curriculum or curriculum resources that are aligned to the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan that districts must use?

The Illinois State Board of Education does not endorse specific curriculum or paid resources. Districts are encouraged to utilize the forthcoming literacy rubric to evaluate local curriculum decisions. The rubric will be available by July 1, 2024.



## What resources exist or are upcoming?

ISBE is in the process of building an Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan ToolKit. Resources will be added to the [ISBE Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan webpage](#) as they become available.



## What resources exist for high school literacy?

Information regarding content and disciplinary literacy is included in Section 1. Additionally, information is included for each literacy component for varied learners, including high school students.



## What professional learning opportunities currently exist?

ISBE is in the process of preparing future professional learning opportunities. Resources will be added to the [ISBE Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan webpage](#) as they become available.



## What should we do first to get started?

We are excited for stakeholders to begin this important work within their local context. We recommend the following steps.

### ACCESS THE PLAN

- Visit the [ISBE Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan webpage](#) to download the plan and view existing resources.
- [Sign up for updates](#) to stay informed on the latest guidance and resources.
- Attend Office Hours to ask questions.

## ASSEMBLE A LITERACY TEAM

- Form a dedicated team comprising key stakeholders who are focused on literacy and represent a diverse range of expertise, including instruction, curriculum development, assessment, and intervention strategies.

## COLLECT AND ANALYZE DATA

- Start by gathering existing data. Consider state and local assessments, classroom grades, and other relevant data sources.
- Identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement to tailor the literacy plan to your local context.
- Conduct an audit of existing resources.



### Will the Curriculum Evaluation Tool change in response to the literacy plan?

Legislation requires a literacy-specific rubric to be available by July 1, 2024. We are currently working to include a literacy component in the [Curriculum Evaluation Tool](#).



### Will we have an evaluation rubric for supplemental material?

The primary focus of the rubric will be for the review of core instructional materials.



### What resources exist to get started?

Current resources include the previously mentioned [webpage](#), Office Hours, recorded webinar, and this FAQ document.

Resources that are being developed include:

- Professional Learning and Resources Landscape Survey (early March)
- Getting Started ToolKit (mid-March)
- Communities of Practice April/May



### Why doesn't the plan use the term "science of reading"?

(Excerpt taken from page 14 of the [Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan](#).)

This plan refrains from referencing the "science of reading" or "balanced literacy" in favor of describing current understandings of literacy development and evidence-based instruction.

The science of reading represents decades of interdisciplinary research that collectively informs how proficient reading and writing develop and emphasizes practices demonstrated to be effective through study. However, some see it as a political agenda and ideology or a new front in the reading debates.

Balanced literacy includes both foundational and language comprehension instructional features, such as phonemic awareness and phonics (understanding the relationships between sounds and their written representations), fluency, guided oral reading, vocabulary development, and comprehension. However, some interpret the term as akin to whole language instruction with little focus on basic skills instruction.



### What timeline is there for districts to implement and be in alignment with the plan?

There is no mandate in legislation for districts to utilize the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan.