

2024


ILLINOIS COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY PLAN



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SUPPORT AND IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

*Photo from Diamond Lake School District 76

This section provides 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.

The primary goal in this section of the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan is crystal clear: To ensure that every system is aligned and dedicated to promoting literacy success for all students at every grade level. It is imperative that districts streamline and focus initiatives on literacy instruction. By doing so, districts empower students with the essential skills and knowledge they need to thrive academically, professionally, and personally. This workbook-style section is designed to guide educators, administrators, and stakeholders in reflecting on the current practices within districts and schools, recognizing the importance of alignment in literacy education and providing actionable strategies to bring about positive change.

Attending to Equity

Equity is prioritized by recognizing that literacy success cannot be achieved without addressing systemic disparities. Improving literacy instruction is one crucial approach to addressing these disparities, ensuring all individuals have the opportunity to develop essential reading and writing skills. Aligning the entire system to prioritize the elimination of barriers and biases that hinder access to quality literacy instruction and resources is necessary. Students come from diverse backgrounds, each with unique needs, strengths, and challenges. This commitment means actively working to provide additional support and resources to those who need it most to ensure that every child, regardless of their background, can acquire adequate literacy skills by graduation. Thoughtful reflection and action can enable districts to create a system in which every student has an equitable opportunity to excel in literacy, setting the stage for a brighter future for all while making equity a central guiding principle.

Next Steps

Identifying literacy leaders within districts is crucial for informed decision-making, data review, and effective planning in education. Literacy leaders may be serving as teachers, reading specialists, resource teachers, principals, school librarians, or other roles within districts. These leaders, equipped with a deep understanding

of literacy dynamics, curriculum development, and instructional strategies, play a pivotal role in shaping and implementing successful literacy initiatives. Their presence at the decision-making table ensures that the unique challenges and opportunities related to literacy are addressed comprehensively. Involving these leaders in data review processes means their insights contribute to a nuanced understanding of student needs and program effectiveness. Their participation in planning initiatives guarantees that literacy goals align with broader curricular outcomes. In essence, having literacy leaders actively engaged in these key aspects of educational governance promotes a holistic and targeted approach to advancing literacy outcomes within the district.

Individuals should consider the questions at the end of this section from specific roles and perspectives and consider what leverages exist that can implement change and transform local systems.

Local Funding Considerations

Blending and braiding funds are essential strategies for optimizing literacy outcomes in a school district. Blending consolidates financial assistance into a unified framework, streamlining reporting and administrative processes for more efficient resource management. This approach provides a comprehensive view of the impact on literacy programs. Conversely, braiding funds involves coordinating resources while preserving each funding source's identity. This strategy allows for tailored interventions, addressing specific literacy needs with a nuanced understanding of each source's contribution. Together, these approaches offer a flexible and strategic financial framework, promoting efficiency and targeted improvements in literacy initiatives.

[Targeted, Comprehensive, and Intensive Schools](#) receiving Title 1, Part A Section 1003 School Improvement Grant funding may wish to consider the leverage of resources to impact literacy outcomes. The purpose of the funding is to build the capacity of school leaders to implement effective school improvement practices. The goal is to enable schools that are engaged in improvement status to raise student achievement, to increase performance outcomes, and to exit status. Funding must be used to develop, implement, and monitor School Improvement Plans. A key part of this process is building the knowledge, skills, and competencies of the adults in the school's system. Increasing adult capacity is a critical step to improving outcomes for all students.

In Summary

This section of the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan serves as a guide for enhancing literacy success across educational systems. It stresses the importance of aligning and committing all systems to improve literacy for students at every level. Key focuses include streamlining district-level literacy initiatives and fostering a culture of reflective practice among educators, administrators, and stakeholders. The section adopts a workbook-style approach to facilitate this reflective process, aiming to align literacy education and propose practical, actionable strategies for improvement. A significant emphasis is placed on equity, addressing systemic disparities to ensure all students, regardless of their background, achieve literacy proficiency. It also highlights the pivotal role of literacy leaders in guiding decision-making, analyzing data, and formulating effective literacy strategies. Furthermore, the section delves into financial strategies like blending and braiding funds to enhance literacy programs.

Deeper Exploration

These are texts suggested through public engagements that demonstrate greatest alignment to this section of the literacy plan. The following resources delve further into the topics covered in this section and offer additional context for this work:

- *Literacy Across the Community: Research, Praxis, and Trends* by Laurie A Henry, Norman A. Stahl
- *Coherence: The Right Drivers in Action for Schools, Districts, and Systems* by Joanne Quinn and Michael Fullan
- *Unlocking Literacy* by Marcia Henry
- *Literacy Is Liberation* by Kimberly N. Parker
- *Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students* by Zaretta Hammond

The following reflections and guiding questions are provided as a resource to help you build on the information provided in the previous sections of this 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**?

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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**?