

READER'S GUIDE

2024 Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan



TEACHER LEADERS



Reader's Guide: Teacher Leaders



This guide is designed as a companion to the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan to support teacher leaders in guiding their teams through effective navigation of the plan and the implementation of evidence-based literacy practices. Tailored specifically for educators in leadership roles, it outlines key strategies, provides suggested readings, and includes workbook pages for practical application. This resource aims at empowering teacher leaders to enhance literacy instruction and support equitable learning environments for every student to achieve literacy success.

Guide Audience

Teacher leaders include bilingual educators, school librarians, reading specialists, literacy and instructional coaches, department chairs, and additional specialists who support classroom teachers. Teacher leaders use data and their expertise to guide educators in creating and maintaining literacy-rich environments. They support different grade levels and contribute to a sustainable and vertically aligned curriculum.

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:

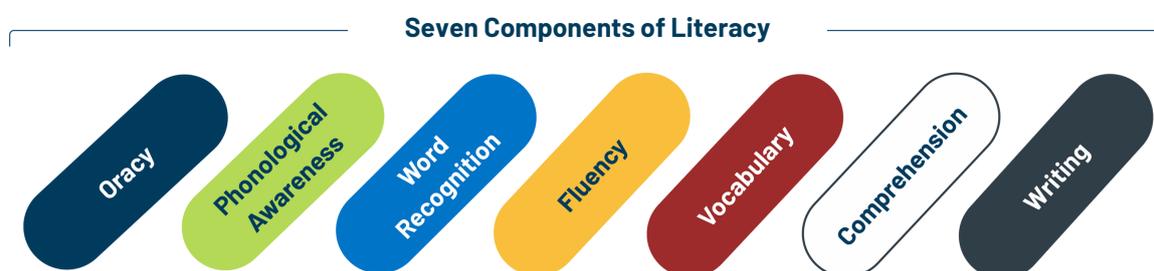
GOAL 1: Every **student** receives high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction.

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 as a teacher leader:

- **Leverage Your Expertise:** Identify areas within the plan where your expertise can best support teachers' professional growth and students' literacy development.
- **Foster Collaboration:** Use the literacy plan as a tool to facilitate professional learning that focuses on improving literacy instruction across grade levels and content areas.
- **Champion Data-Driven Practices:** Guide educators in using assessment data to identify student needs, monitor progress, and tailor instruction to improve literacy outcomes for all students.
- **Support Equitable Literacy Practices:** Advocate for practices that address the diverse needs of students and are implemented in ways that are inclusive, equitable, and provide all students access to high-quality literacy instruction.
- **Enhance Vertical Alignment:** Work toward a vertically aligned curriculum by ensuring that literacy strategies and practices are consistent and build upon each other from one grade level to the next. Support educators in understanding how their instruction fits into the broader curriculum and contributes to students' long-term literacy development.
- **Inspire Innovation:** Encourage educators to experiment with innovative literacy practices and instructional strategies.

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 teacher leaders is:

Introduction.....8-21

- **Why is This Plan Necessary?** on pages 10 and 11
 - Utilize the [Illinois School Report Card](#) to layer IAR data with other existing local data.
- **Illinois' Guiding Values for Literacy** on pages 12 and 13
 - Examine local literacy initiatives for evidence of these values.

Section 1: Framework for Effective Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction.....22-102

- **Goal 1 Workbook: Teacher Leaders Reflection Questions** on page 81
 - Preview these questions to focus your reading.
- **Seven Components of Literacy** on pages 33 through 61
 - Use these pages to begin examining your local literacy practices for evidence of each component. Explore each component through the [Further Reading](#) suggestions.
- **Additional Instructional Factors** on pages 62 through 70
 - Focus on the information within these pages that best represents your student demographics and teaching needs.
- **Multi-Tiered System of Supports and Literacy** on pages 70 through 76
 - Compare the local MTSS structure to the information shared within this section.
- **Goal 1 Workbook: Teachers Leaders** on pages 80 through 81
 - Return to the workbook to record your thoughts and review the implementation considerations and next steps.

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

- **Professional Learning for In-Service Educators** on pages 109 through 112
 - Refer to these pages for guidance on quality professional learning.
- **Goal 2 Workbook: Teacher Leaders** on pages 117 through 118
 - Record your thoughts and review the implementation considerations, next steps, and reflection questions.

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

- **Leadership Levers to Promote Literacy Success** on pages 133 through 134
 - Consider the levers described and how they apply to your local context.
- **Goal 3 Workbook: Teacher Leaders** on pages 139 through 140
 - Record your thoughts and review the implementation considerations, next steps, and reflection questions.

Section 5: Tools and Resources.....174-192

Workbook

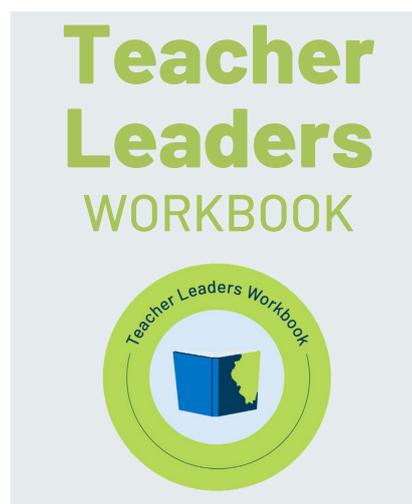
The **Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan** includes workbook pages at the end of its sections, offering a hands-on approach to apply the concepts presented in the narrative. These workbooks combine reflection tools and action planning to enhance user engagement.

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 teacher leaders can maximize the benefits of these pages:

- **Leverage Data to Inform Instruction:** Utilize data-driven insights to tailor the workbook's reflective questions and action plans to the needs of your educational setting. Your expertise in analyzing data can help identify areas of strength and need within the literacy curriculum.
- **Promote Cross-Disciplinary Literacy Strategies:** Encourage and facilitate cross-disciplinary planning sessions where educators can share how literacy is integrated into their subjects. By fostering a culture of collaboration across disciplines, you help ensure that literacy development is recognized as a shared responsibility, enriching students' learning experiences across all subjects.
- **Support Curriculum Integration:** Work with classroom teachers and school leaders to integrate evidence-based literacy practices into the broader curriculum. Your role involves not just the application of these strategies but also ensuring they are embedded within a coherent, vertically aligned curriculum that promotes literacy development at all grade levels.
- **Lead by Example in Reflective Practice:** Champion the importance of documenting progress and engaging in reflective practice regarding literacy instruction. Organize and lead regular meetings or professional development sessions where educators can share successes, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing the workbook's strategies. Your leadership can create a culture of continuous improvement and encourage educators to remain adaptive and responsive to the evolving needs of their students.



GOAL 1

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

Implementation Considerations

- ✓ Classroom environments should be rich with evidence-based literacy practices.
- ✓ Effective collaboration between all levels ensures the integration of evidence-based literacy practices within classroom instruction.
- ✓ Curriculum and access to resources must be equitable and implemented with fidelity.
- ✓ Literacy instruction should combat the barriers that may exist outside the classroom.
- ✓ Teacher leaders need to be equipped to make evidence-based instructional decisions that are data-based, student-centered, and consistent vertically across grade bands.

Next Steps

- Ensure that curated collections of materials that enhance units are available and well-implemented.
- Identify cross-curricular connections to infuse literacy in all subject areas.
- Acknowledge that best practices evolve and work to support educators in the transition.
- Focus on consistent data collection that shows student growth and areas of need over grade-level bands.
- Communicate implementation success, needs, and gaps with teachers and administrators.

NOTES

Reflection Questions

1. What are the essential components of literacy-rich classroom environments?
2. How does a literacy-rich classroom environment look and sound?
3. How does equitable implementation across all student populations look?
4. What tools and systems (instruction, curriculum, interventions, data, etc.) are in place to assess if the curriculum and related resources are of high quality?
5. What obstacles get in the way of me implementing evidence-based literacy best practices with fidelity?

GOAL 2

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

Implementation Considerations

- ✓ Teacher leader capacity in evidence-based literacy practice is essential in shifting educators' instructional practices.
- ✓ Mentoring and supporting fellow teachers in implementing literacy practices requires teacher leaders to prioritize their own professional learning in literacy.
- ✓ The newest reading research in literacy pedagogy should guide professional development and instructional decisions and teacher leaders should commit to staying updated in this area.
- ✓ Collaboration with school leadership to align literacy goals to the needs of the district is key.
- ✓ Data should drive professional learning decision making.

Next Steps

- Connects with experts in the field to share strategies that will enhance instruction and provide opportunities for teacher growth in mindset and practice.
- Organize and lead literacy-focused workshops or PLCs.
- Provide ongoing coaching and feedback to teachers.
- Collaborate with school leaders to set literacy-related goals aligned to the local literacy plan and the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan.
- Create a resource library for teachers on evidence-based literacy practices.
- Advocate for dedicated time and resources for literacy instruction.

NOTES

Reflection Questions

1. What support is needed for educators to effectively utilize the available tools and systems?
2. What professional development experiences equip educators to make evidence-based literacy decisions? What can I provide? What professional learning do I need help providing?
3. How can I promote a culture of evidence-based literacy instruction within my school?
4. What data can inform decisions about professional learning?
5. Are there specific challenges or needs related to literacy instruction within our school?

GOAL 3

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

Implementation Considerations

- ✓ The entire school community must work together to curate opportunities for a home-to-school connection by providing opportunities for literacy-based programming, access to a school library, or by creating additional literacy access points for students in and out of the school learning environment.
- ✓ Teacher leaders serve as instructional experts and advocates for literacy excellence in their schools.
- ✓ Empowering teacher leaders with leadership skills and literacy expertise amplifies their influence on peers.
- ✓ Mentorship and collaboration with teachers are essential components of teacher leaders' roles in shaping literacy conditions.

Next Steps

- School administrators can hire certified teacher leaders who are specialists in their field and create systems of support for classroom teachers and students.
- Facilitate professional learning communities focused on literacy improvement.
- Seek opportunities for leadership training and development.
- Mentor and coach teachers in literacy best practices.

NOTES

Reflection Questions

1. How can teacher leaders streamline curricular goals and focus on effective literacy strategies and initiatives?
2. How can I support fellow teachers in implementing evidence-based literacy practices?
3. What leadership skills do I need to effectively advocate for literacy excellence in my school?
4. How can I foster a culture of continuous improvement in literacy instruction?

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?

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: 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: 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 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**?



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