READER'S GUIDE

2024 Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan

Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan

TEACHERS

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
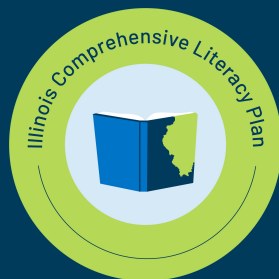
This guide is designed as a companion to the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan to support teachers in effectively navigating the plan and implementing evidence-based practices in their classrooms. Tailored specifically for educators, it outlines key strategies, provides suggested readings aligned with their roles, and includes workbook pages for practical application. This resource aims at empowering teachers to enhance literacy instruction and support equitable learning environments for every student to achieve literacy success.

Guide Audience

Educators encompass a diverse group of professionals, including teachers, paraprofessionals, interventionists, and specialists responsible for delivering literacy instruction. They create a supportive and engaging learning environment, foster a love of reading and writing, tailor instruction to diverse needs, and collaborate to ensure literacy goals are met.

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.
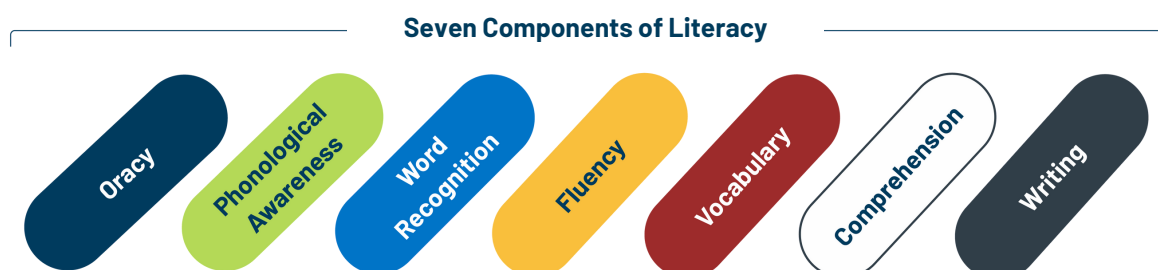
The plan focuses on three main goals:

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.

Seven Components of Literacy

Oracy · Phonological Awareness · Word Recognition · Fluency · Vocabulary · Comprehension · Writing

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 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 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 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 4: Support and Implementation Considerations highlights critical strategies for developing and implementing the literacy plan, through a workbook style format.

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:

- **Focus on Relevance**: Start by identifying parts of the plan that are directly relevant to your classroom practices, instructional strategies, and professional development needs.

- **Seek Actionable Insights**: Look for actionable insights and resources within the plan that can be immediately applied to enhance your teaching and support your students' literacy development.

- **Understand the Broader System**: Recognize the importance of understanding the larger educational and policy environment in which your teaching operates, including the role of leadership, policy frameworks, and community engagement in literacy efforts.

- **Connect Your Role to the Larger Effort**: See how your role as an educator intersects with broader literacy efforts, acknowledging the importance of your contribution to the overall literacy strategy within your school and district.

- **Appreciate the Diversity of Needs**: Be aware of the diverse needs of your students and consider how the plan addresses these needs, ensuring that your approach to literacy instruction is inclusive and equitable.

- **Adopt a Dual Perspective**: Balance your focus on the immediate applicability of the plan's recommendations to your role with an understanding of the larger system of literacy education, aiming to contribute effectively to a cohesive and comprehensive literacy strategy.

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 teachers is:

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 teachers can maximize the benefits of these pages:

- **Facilitate Collaborative Reflections:** Encourage colleagues within your school or district to collaborate when working through the workbook pages, especially those in Section 4: Support and Implementation Considerations. This collaboration fosters a shared understanding and approach to literacy instruction. Group discussions can lead to insightful reflections and innovative strategies tailored to your local context.

- **Customize to Fit Your Needs:** Adapt the reflective questions and action plans to better fit the unique needs of your classroom or community. This customization might involve focusing on specific sections more relevant to your current literacy goals or modifying the suggested next steps to match your resources and constraints.

- **Integrate with Existing Curriculum:** Look for opportunities to incorporate the action plans and reflection tools from the workbook pages into your existing literacy practices. This integration can help students directly benefit from the improved instructional strategies and ensures that literacy efforts are consistent and ongoing.

- **Document Progress and Reflect:** Make it a practice to document the outcomes and reflect on the effectiveness of different approaches. This ongoing evaluation can be facilitated through regular team meetings or written reflections, helping to identify successful strategies and areas for future improvement. Engaging in this reflective practice ensures that literacy instruction is dynamic and responsive to both educator and student needs.

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.

✓ Educators 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.

☐ Ensure the instruction delivers access to decodable books where students practice what they are learning.

☐ Acknowledge that best practices evolve.

☐ Collaborate within grade bands, school, and district to ensure curriculum is implemented with fidelity.

☐ Utilize consistent data collection that shows student growth and areas of need over grade-level bands.

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

✓ Professional learning priorities and experiences vary and recognizing how prior learning experiences were anchored is important.

✓ Educators' professional learning goals are valuable mechanisms to build capacity in evidence-based literacy instruction.

✓ Collaboration with colleagues to share effective instructional strategies and resources should be prioritized as they benefit student achievement.

✓ Ongoing formative assessment to adapt instruction is valuable, and professional learning should reflect this need.

✓ Educators need to be equipped to make evidence-based instructional decisions that are data-based, student-centered, and consistent vertically across grade bands.

Next Steps

☐ Create an individual professional learning plan focused on evidence-based literacy practices.

☐ Attend relevant workshops, webinars, or conferences.

☐ Form or join a literacy-focused PLC (Professional Learning Community).

☐ Request peer observations and provide feedback to colleagues.

☐ Collect and analyze student data to inform instructional adjustments.

☐ Advocate for quality professional learning on evidence-based literacy practices within your school or district.

NOTES

Reflection Questions

1. How does the literacy plan ensure that it is accessible and inclusive for all students, including those with diverse backgrounds and abilities?

2. How can the partnership between schools and families be strengthened to enhance literacy development for our students?

3. Does the literacy plan distribute resources, such as funding, materials, and staffing, in an equitable manner?

4. Are there any resource disparities that need to be addressed to ensure that all students have access to quality literacy education?

5. What assessment methods are outlined locally, and do they provide fair and meaningful insights into student progress?

GOAL 3

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

Implementation Considerations

✓ Teachers play a pivotal role in fostering a culture of literacy within their classrooms and school communities.

✓ Equipping teachers with the knowledge and tools to promote literacy empowers them to be effective agents of change.

✓ Collaboration among teachers, teacher leaders, and other stakeholders is essential for creating a comprehensive literacy-supportive environment.

Next Steps

☐ Attend professional development workshops focused on literacy instruction.

☐ Collaborate with colleagues to share effective literacy strategies and resources.

☐ Engage in ongoing assessment and reflection of literacy practices in the classroom.

NOTES

Reflection Questions

1. How can I integrate literacy promotion into my subject-specific instruction and classroom routines?

2. What professional development opportunities can help me enhance my literacy instruction skills?

3. How can I collaborate with teacher leaders and administrators to align classroom practices with literacy goals?

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.

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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?

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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?

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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**?

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Reflection: What **key elements** must be included in the final plan?
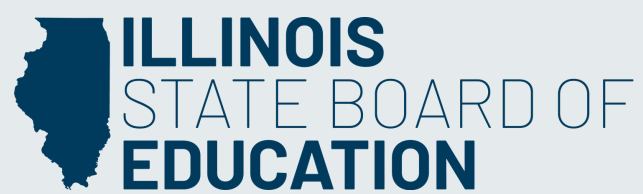
Guiding Question:

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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