



Independence School District Comprehensive Literacy Plan:

Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12

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Introduction

The ISD Comprehensive Literacy Plan is a resource for parents, caregivers, teachers, and administrators all along the PK to college and career continuum. The Plan addresses the crucial role that early education plays in a child’s literacy development. The ISD Comprehensive Literacy Plan supports teachers and administrators with information and resources to guide instruction, coordination of staff support, and alignment of goals. The Plan provides guidance on the components of the ISD Literacy Model.

Pillars of ISD



The Independence School District has four pillars that are the focus of the district. These include: Literacy, Math Computation and Problem Solving, College and Career Readiness and Increasing Student Attendance. The pillars are built upon the foundation of the Student and Family Experience.

Independence School District Literacy Philosophy

The Independence School District has the following learning beliefs to guide our work.

- Learning is our core purpose.
- Trusting relationships and commitment to our core values will foster learning at all levels.
- Effective teaching is the most essential factor in student learning.
- ISD is committed to ensuring that every student learns and succeeds, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, language proficiency, or disability.

Guiding Principles

Equity: The ISD recognizes literacy education is complex and requires our commitment to be purposeful and deliberate in all levels of literacy development across all contexts. We acknowledge the support needed for the non academic barriers our students face including, poverty, physical and mental health, and lack of social-emotional skills that impact the ability to learn at the highest levels. ISD educators recognize social and cultural diversity within our schools. Our learning environments provide access to rich literacy experiences that include print, digital, audio and visual resources to ensure equitable, student-centered literacy engagement.

Curriculum: In the ISD, teachers develop a focused literacy curriculum that aligns with the Missouri Learning Standards with an emphasis on the ISD priority standards. The curriculum is well articulated and includes a coherent progression from grades PreK-12.

Teaching and Learning: In the ISD, teaching and learning engages students in critical thinking through the reciprocal processes of reading, writing, speaking and listening for authentic purposes many times throughout the school day. Through the use of the ISD Literacy Instructional Model, teachers utilize a balanced instructional approach to support students in gaining proficient skill sets in comprehension, communication and collaboration.

Assessment and Feedback: In the ISD, literacy assessments are used to monitor student growth and to drive purposeful instruction based on evidence from a variety of data. All students are screened in order for teachers to identify student literacy strengths and weaknesses. Through the analysis of this evidence, our schools utilize a multi-tiered system of support to provide targeted interventions and progress monitoring. Grade level and course curriculum mastery is monitored by the administration of ISD common assessments that are aligned with the Missouri Learning Standards and the priority Grade Level Equivalencies of the ISD. Literacy assessment and feedback are intertwined to ensure students are engaged in their own learning process.

Professional Development: In the ISD, each educator has access to high-quality professional learning so they can cultivate the strengths and address the needs of each student they serve.

Plan Organization

The ISD Comprehensive Literacy Plan is based on an approach where literacy achievement for all students is expected.

Standards - ISD has clear expectations for what all students will know and be able to do. The curriculum is aligned to the Missouri Learning Standards.

Assessment - Comprehensive identification of literacy needs are identified through screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic assessments

Instruction and Intervention - An evidence-based approach to instruction is utilized that meets individual student needs.

Leadership - Leaders at the district, building, and classroom levels collaborate to build shared ownership and direction toward literacy success.

System-wide Commitment - ISD has a shared vision and a belief that literacy achievement is a key, achievable mission of the district. Commitment is required at every level to reach the goal of literacy for all students.

Standards

The ISD literacy curriculum is aligned to the Missouri Learning Standards. Clear standards help improve teaching, inform planning, and maintain accountability.

Standards provide common expectations for all students. They are critical to:

- Creating a common roadmap for student success.
- Enabling collaboration across and within department, grade level and content areas.
- Aligning instructional materials and strategies to individual student needs.
- Leveraging assessment data to identify where instructional supplements and teacher training are needed.

By aligning strategies, instructional materials and assessments to standards, students will reap the benefits of a consistent, cohesive, and sequential education. Standards should be viewed as a tool to inform the curriculum and create high-quality teaching and learning environments for all students, especially those at risk for poor outcomes. Standards provide clarity about what is most fundamental in teaching the concepts.

Missouri Early Learning Standards

Missouri Early Learning Standards (MELS) are a framework of expectations for what children can do from infancy to kindergarten entry. Each standard includes a description of what the child may be doing to demonstrate meeting the standard, as well as, activities to give adults examples of ways to support the child in learning and mastering a skill or knowledge.

Using the MELS promotes the understanding of early learning and development, provides a comprehensive set of early childhood educational expectations for children's development and learning, and guides the design and implementation of curriculum, assessment and instructional practices with young children.

[Missouri Early Learning Standards](#)

K-12 Missouri English Language Arts Standards

The Missouri Learning Standards help ensure students learn basic and higher-order skills, including problem solving and critical thinking. The standards are relevant to the real world and reflect the knowledge and skills students need to achieve their goals. Learning outcomes improve when students, parents, and teachers work together toward shared goals. The Missouri Learning Standards give school administrators, teachers, parents and students a road map for learning expectations in each grade and course.

[Missouri English Language Arts Learning Standards \(K-5\)](#)

[Missouri English Language Arts Learning Standards \(6-12\)](#)

Parent Involvement

Early Childhood	Elementary	Secondary
*Family activities aligned to Early Education curriculum occur a minimum of three times per semester	*Monthly family activities aligned to grade level curriculum	*Family activities aligned to building priorities
*Building Literacy activities	*Building literacy activities	*Building literacy activities

Standards to Support Today's Literacy Needs

The shifts in literacy instruction will help improve literacy outcomes.

1. Teaching both literary and informational texts
 - a. Half of readings are informational texts by grade 4
 - b. Connect students to the world - science, social studies, the arts, and literature - through text
2. Teaching literacy in content areas
 - a. Integrate literacy into science and social studies lessons
3. Text complexity increases in each grade
 - a. More time and space for close and careful reading
 - b. Support for students reading below grade level
4. More text-based questions and answers
 - a. Rich discussions dependent on common text
 - b. Students reference the text to make evidence-based arguments in discussion and writing
5. Writing using evidence
 - a. Focus on the use of reason and evidence to make arguments or claims
 - b. Improve research ability
 - c. Incorporate technology to create, refine, and collaborate on writing
6. Academic vocabulary
 - a. Build vocabulary to assess grade-level, complex text
 - b. Focus on vocabulary that crosses content areas

English Language Development

English Language Development (ELD) instruction is designed specifically to advance English learners (ELs) knowledge and use of English in increasingly sophisticated ways. In the context of the larger effort to help English learners succeed in school, ELD instruction is designed to help them learn and acquire English to a level of proficiency that maximizes their capacity to engage successfully in academic studies taught in English.

Assessments

The use of assessments is critical to improve literacy outcomes in ISD. Effective assessments enable evidence-based decision making in the classroom, school, and district. To be effective, assessments must be valid and reliable.

There are many types of assessments, each tailored to provide meaningful and timely information to improve student outcomes. It is important to assess students using multiple measures and multiple ways, both formal and informal.

The Role of Assessments

- Determine a child's progress toward standards
- Ensure students have mastered the skills they need
- Identify needs and assist in planning
- Guide instruction and identify where intervention is needed
- Enable collaboration and communication between teachers and administrators
- Set priorities at all levels - individual classroom, school, and district

The Role of Assessments in Early Childhood

Assessments in a child's earliest years provide information on how the child is progressing, what skills they have mastered, and what skills they are still developing.

In literacy, meaningful assessments are connected to child development . Communication is the basis for reading and writing and, for very young children, communication is first expressed through touch and oral language. Assessing a child's progress in key areas of development is important to support their continued learning.

Assessments for young children require an understanding of family context, including language and culture, and are typically done by gathering information from parents. As children move into preschool settings, on-going assessments continue to provide essential data to help in the development of the whole child.

Comprehensive Literacy Assessment System

ISD uses the following assessments to get baseline data, progress monitor, and to make instructional data-driven decisions.

Assessment	Grade Level(s)	Purpose
Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP-2015)	Infant to 5 years	*Portfolio style assessment (Language and Literacy Development)
FastBridge - CBMReading	1-5	*Reading screener and progress monitor *Administered 1:1
FastBridge - earlyReading	K-1	*Assesses various reading skills *Administered 1:1
FastBridge- aReading	2-10	*Formative assessment *Reading skills screener *Adaptive assessment *Gives teachers and administrators data to monitor progress
LETRS Phonics and Word - Reading Survey	1-5	*Identifying which correspondences and patterns the student has learned and ones that need to be taught *Administered 1:1
DnA Common Assessments	K-12	*Summative assessment at end of each unit of instruction
MAP Grade Level/End of Course Assessments	3-12	*Provides data related to proficiency of Missouri Learning Standards *Provides data for instructional program evaluation

District Assessments

- Each grade level and course has common unit assessments administered in predetermined testing windows. This is a formative assessment for teachers to analyze to see where reteaching may be needed.

Missouri State Required Assessments

- WIDA - ACCESS is administered to K-12 students who have been identified as English Learners (ELs). It is given annually to monitor students' progress in learning academic English and reporting the students' progress toward English language proficiency. The assessment consists of four language domains of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. ISD administers the assessment during the months of January and February.

- MAP Grade-Level assessment is a yearly standards-based test that measures specific skills defined for each grade by the state of Missouri. All students in grades 3-8 in Missouri public and charter schools take the Grade-Level assessment.
- MAP End-of-Course assessments are taken when a student has received and mastered instruction on the Missouri Learning Standards for a course, regardless of grade level. Students in Missouri have an English II End-of-Course assessment that is required prior to high school graduation.

Using Assessment Data

While assessments provide necessary data, an effective system is required to interpret and use assessment data to drive instruction and improvement. The ISD utilizes data cycles in teacher collaboration meetings. Teachers analyze standards, students' performance on Missouri Learning Standards and district priority standards to determine next steps in whole group and small group instruction. Teachers meet in cadre meetings to review student data to determine which students need additional support and which instructional resources should be utilized.

Instruction and Intervention

ISD Comprehensive Literacy Plan supports instruction, prevention, and intervention decisions to improve literacy outcomes. The plan is organized around three facts:

- Literacy begins at birth
- Literacy requires many skills across all content areas
- Literacy improves through responsive and differentiated instruction

The Plan emphasizes access to the core curriculum for *all* students and includes resources to meet additional data-indicated student needs.

Literacy begins at Birth: PreK and Early Literacy

Research shows that positive early language and literacy development increase potential for future success. Interaction with parents, caregivers, child care professionals and teachers play a key role in the first year of a child's early development. A child achieves competency in essential school readiness skills once he or she has experienced and mastered development skills.

We know that infants and toddlers learn differently than older children:

- **Specific curriculum needs.** Science provides evidence on how and what infants and toddlers learn from their experiences. Infant/toddler curriculum must be developmentally appropriate and individualized to the unique needs of each child.

National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, [From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development](#), 2000.

- **Relationships** are the context for infant and toddler learning.
- **Infants and toddlers have their own learning agenda.** Their focus and attention is primarily internally regulated. This means that they are unable to maintain focus on an externally prescribed object or event, such as with formal instruction.
- **Self-direction.** The role of the caregiver or teacher needs to be more of a facilitator of experiences and learning by discovering and supporting the child's own learning agenda.
- **Individualized support.** Infants and toddlers do not require a packaged set of activities. Instead, they need an individualized approach that lets the child take the lead. Teachers and caregivers support what the child is focused on, appears interested in, and is ready to discover.

ISD Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

ISD utilizes the MTSS framework to monitor critical indicators of school success triggering evidence-based responses to identified student needs.



Tier 1: All students receive high quality instruction.

- [ISD curriculum for all students](#)

Tier 2: Targeted small group interventions

- [Tier 2 and Tier 3 Interventions](#)

Tier 3: Intensive individual interventions

- [Tier 2 and Tier 3 Interventions](#)

Literacy requires many skills - an integrated cognitive process

Literacy is not confined only to reading. It is an ongoing process that involves listening, speaking, reading, writing, and critical thinking. All elements are inextricably connected and necessary for a child to be literate and navigate successfully in the world.

Reading	Writing
<p>Phonological Awareness * Awareness of the phonological structure or sound structure of spoken words.</p> <p>Phonemic Awareness * Understanding that words are made up of separate units of sound. For example, the spoken word “cat” can be broken down into the three distinct sounds or phonemes of /k/, /æ/ and /t/.</p> <p>Phonics and Word Recognition * Understanding the relationship between letters and the sounds they represent . Phonics enables learners to decode new words by sounding them out.</p> <p>Fluency * Ability to read a text accurately at a reasonable rate and with enough expression that it sounds like language.</p> <p>Comprehension *Ability to construct meaning by connecting what is read or spoken to what the child already knows. *Background knowledge *Oral language proficiency *Verbal reasoning *Literacy knowledge *Knowing the meanings and pronunciation of words to listen, read and communicate effectively.</p>	<p>Spelling *Ability to write words with letters *Pre alphabetic *Partial alphabetic *Full alphabetic</p> <p>Fluency *Ability to write clearly and effectively</p> <p>Oral Language</p> <p>Birth-Infant *Tier 1 words most important *Usually start with a noun *Receptive/expressive key features *Exposed to 3-4 words a day *Multiple experiences- need 24 exposures to a word *Linking words to “knowledge networks” or bigger concepts</p>
<p>Technology Library Media Specialists Expectations The ability to use the appropriate technology responsibly, creatively, and effectively to: *Communicate, access, collect, manage, integrate, and evaluate information. *Solve problems and create solutions. *Build and share knowledge. *Improve and enhance learning in all subject areas and experiences.</p>	<p>Technology Library Media Specialists Expectations The ability to use the appropriate technology responsibly, creatively, and effectively to: *Communicate, access, collect, manage, integrate, and evaluate information. *Solve problems and create solutions. *Build and share knowledge. *Improve and enhance learning in all subject areas and experiences.</p>
<p>Critical Thinking *A process of thinking that questions assumptions</p>	<p>Critical Thinking *A process of thinking that questions assumptions</p>
<p>Motivation *Excitement and ongoing interest in reading, writing and communicating</p>	<p>Motivation *Excitement and ongoing interest in reading, writing and communicating</p>

Responsive and Differentiated Instruction

The Independence School District uses data to guide instruction and interventions for all students. This multi-level approach integrates standards, assessment and intervention within a school-wide prevention model to maximize student learning.

In the early learning settings, the approach entails responsive caregiving and individual child support. In the classroom setting, teachers identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions based on the student's responsiveness. This process is designed to optimize language and literacy instruction to address and prevent any gaps immediately. Differentiated assessments and instruction are used so that each individual learner receives the intensity of instruction he or she needs.

Multi-level Instructional Framework

Effective teachers practice differentiated instruction with flexible grouping in small groups. Teachers have small groups for students who need additional support on specific concepts and skills.

- Core Program (Tier I) - All students receive quality core instruction covering all areas of literacy development.
- Strategic Instruction (Tier II) - Supplemental instruction in small groups in addition to the Tier I instruction.
- Intensive Intervention (Tier III) - Targeted intervention to help make progress towards content standards.

This differentiated approach does not end in the classroom. It provides a common language so that educators can collaborate on progress monitoring results and instructional planning in the classroom, the building, and at the district.

Key Elements of Literacy Instruction

Age	Birth-Age 3	Age 4-K	Grades K-3	Grades 4-6	Grades 7-12
Purpose	Introduction to language, communication, and literacy	Students develop language and literacy skills	Students develop literacy skills	Students apply literacy skills with some assistance	Students independently apply literacy skills
Components	Specifics in language and communication	Specifics in language, literacy, and communication: *Phonemic Awareness *Phonics *Fluency *Vocabulary *Comprehension	*Phonemic Awareness *Phonics (K-2) *Fluency *Vocabulary *Comprehension *Writing *Communication	*Fluency *Vocabulary *Structural Analysis *Comprehension *Phonics, if needed *Writing *Communication	*Fluency Maintenance *Vocabulary: roots *Academic Language *Content Specific Terms *Structural Analysis *Comprehension *Writing *Communication
Time	*Varies	*Varies	*Allotted instruction time per day; more for struggling students	*Allotted instruction time per day; more for struggling students	*Allotted instruction time per day; additional class period for struggling students
Tiers of Instruction	*Individual	*Whole class *Small groups *Individual	*Core: Classroom instruction for all students plus strategic instruction for faltering students and/or intensive intervention for severely struggling students.		
Group Sizes	*Individual	*Whole class *Small groups *Individual	*Tier I: Whole class *Tier II: Groups of 6 or fewer *Tier III: (grades K-6) groups of 3 *Tier III: (grades 7-12) 15 students or as recommended by intervention		

Assessments	*Screening and assessment tools	*Screening and assessment tools	*Screening *Formative Assessments *Diagnostics *Progress Monitoring *Summative Assessments
Teaching Methods	*Speaking and listening *Experience based learning *Reading to and with the child *Modeling words and whole sentences	*Experience based learning, think- aloud, explicit direct and sequential instruction	*Explicit, direct and sequential instruction, modeling, think-aloud, check for understanding, active engagement, guided practice
Genres	*A balance of narrative and expository	*A balance of narrative and expository	*A balance of narrative, expository text, and persuasive/argumentative texts; writing text types (narrative, expository/informative, and opinion/argumentative)

Components of Reading

ISD has incorporated the five components of reading instruction in literacy instruction. By analyzing the district data, the data revealed that teachers and administrators felt confident in the area of Comprehension and Fluency. In the areas of Phonological Awareness, Phonics and Vocabulary, the district has the opportunity for improvement in these areas.

Phonological Awareness	Phonics	Fluency	Vocabulary	Comprehension
<p>Strong phonological awareness provides the foundation for success in reading. Phonological awareness is the ability to notice the sound structure of spoken words, such as syllables, rhyming parts and individual phonemes. Phonological awareness is the ability to identify, isolate and manipulate individual phonemes in spoken words.</p>	<p>Phonics is essential in building foundational reading skills. Phonics is the study of the relationships between sounds and written language. Students need to develop strong phonics and word study skills in order to read and write unfamiliar words independently.</p>	<p>Fluent reading is an important characteristic of effective reading, both for word identification and comprehension. Fluency is the ability to read text accurately, smoothly at an appropriate rate and with expression. Students should read daily using a variety of texts across genres and mediums, including decodable texts, and for sustained lengths of time.</p>	<p>Direct instruction in vocabulary is vital to the development of reading comprehension. Vocabulary refers to understanding words in the context of reading. Students should engage in Marzano’s 6-step model of vocabulary development using Tier 2 words.</p>	<p>Comprehension of different genres of texts is the ultimate reading goal for students in ISD. Students should use metacognition to use schema, visualize, infer, determine importance, ask questions and synthesize. These strategies are necessary to understand and interpret what is being read.</p>

Birth to 5 Years

Emergent Literacy Instruction

The ISD Comprehensive Literacy Plan stresses the importance of early education in developing language skills necessary for literacy. The plan builds on:

- **Research on brain development.** Research demonstrates the importance of nurturing relationships, environment and experience as children move from infancy to school.
- **Early Learning Development Guidelines.** The [Missouri Early Education Standards](#) cover all aspects of a child’s development.

K-12 Students

Instruction and Intervention

Effective evidence based teaching practice is critical to improving literacy outcomes.

Tools

- **Scientific research.** Provides the latest information and findings on brain development and learning and can help inform informational practices.

- **High quality materials that can be modified.** ISD selects instructional materials that align to the district curriculum and supports the Missouri Learning Standards.
- **Appropriate media.** ISD selects media that complements the teaching of reading, writing, listening, and speaking to develop students' skills in media literacy.
- **Technology.** ISD uses technology to teach technology skills that integrate technology into instruction and assessment and includes access to a variety of technology tools.
- **Monitor progress and respond appropriately.** ISD utilizes assessment data to monitor and improve instruction through modeling, scaffolding, guided practice, and small group work.

Approach

- **Standards-based instruction.** ISD aligns the curriculum to the Missouri Learning Standards
- **Make learning meaningful.** ISD is committed to providing positive and meaningful feedback to students.
- **Student-focused learning environments.** Appropriate classroom management principles, processes, and practices foster a safe, positive, student-focused learning environment.
- **Curriculum** is evidence-based and focuses on the diverse needs and literacy abilities of each student.
- **Inform, involve, and collaborate with families and community members** as partners in each child's educational journey and use information about student achievement and performance.
- **Use instructional methods** that foster critical thinking, questioning, inquiry, student decision-making, and independent learning tied to standards.
- **Be creative and collaborative,** develop a solid knowledge about and commitment to the Science of Reading, literacy instruction and participate in ongoing professional development.

Grades 9-12

Developing Active Literacy

All students will have access to the core curriculum. Where the data shows that more targeted instruction is necessary, the core can be supplemented with additional support.

Secondary teachers will have evidence-based tools and skills to teach reading, writing, listening, and speaking, and to differentiate and provide instruction for students with varying skills.

Practices that engage struggling readers are

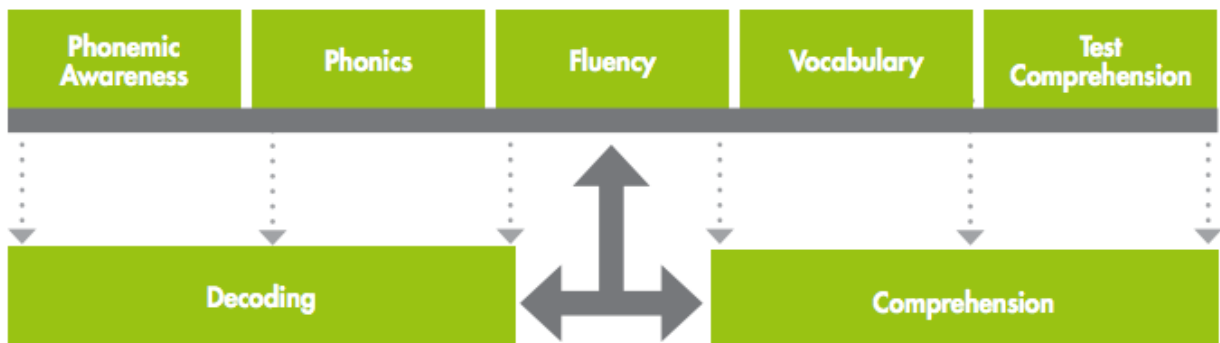
- **Set goals**
 - Set classroom goals and communicate them to students
 - Set short term goals and assign tasks to increase self-efficacy for struggling learners
 - Establish a culture of high expectations to foster a sense of control and accomplishment.
- **Use student-focused instruction**
 - Show students that you know them and know what they need to learn
 - Support learner autonomy and control to influence student motivation
 - Make connections to students' lives to increase engagement and meaning.

What are the literacy expectations for K-12?

When students enter school, they start by developing foundational skills that will soon become essential literacy skills. The skills begin with the five components of literacy which form the building blocks for accessing and comprehending expository and informational texts.

Elementary Progression

Reading



Writing:

- Starts with conveying meaning through pictures and print
- Expands to organizing writing around a central idea, elaborating using complete sentences, and synthesizing information from a number of sources
- Competence becomes evident through paragraphing, summarizing, and synthesizing in exposition, argumentation, and content-area writing
- Fiction writing reflects an awareness of its role to entertain, explore human relationships, and persuade

Communication:

- Students learn how to listen attentively and by orally sharing their own ideas
- As they progress through the elementary grades, they continue to develop listening and presentation skills while adjusting language based on audience, setting and purpose

Secondary Progression:**Reading:**

- Independent reading is purposeful, automatic, and results in comprehension
- Students continue to increase their skills in unpacking content and academic vocabulary
- Ability to analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources

Writing:

- Ability to write narrative, explanatory/informative, and argumentative texts independently with confidence, proficiency, and accuracy
- Students employ writing process and revision process techniques with efficacy
- Students choose the most appropriate mode and style of writing to achieve the desired result for the intended audience and purpose

Communication:

- Students synthesize interpersonal and personal intercultural communication norms to guide, monitor, and adjust their own communication

Prevention, Intervention, and Disabilities

It is important to include students with disabilities in core literacy classes. All students learn from the same stories, poems, and other resources with appropriate modifications, such as reading aloud, partner reading, digital text display, and books on tape. Access to the general education instructional program lays the foundation for literacy.

English Language Instruction

English learners face special challenges in developing literacy skills in English. In addition to learning new subject-area content, they are working to master new language skills. They may not be able to hear or distinguish between all of the sounds in the English phonological system and may not yet understand the English language structure and grammar.

Effective Teaching for EL Students includes:

Standards	Assessment	Instruction & Intervention	Leadership	Systemwide Commitment
<p>*Use the English Language Development Standards as well as the learning standards to plan instruction.</p>	<p>*Assess English Language Development proficiency early and intervene early</p> <p>*Use multiple measures to monitor progress</p> <p>*Regularly monitor the progress of each student</p>	<p>*Use visual representations, modeling, pantomime, etc. to access multiple modalities</p> <p>*Model expected outcomes during instruction</p> <p>*Always use positive reinforcement</p> <p>*Regularly assess current research in teaching second language students, such as modifying language of test questions to ensure sentences are not overly complex</p>	<p>*Know that effective EL strategies are effective for all students</p> <p>*See the ELD Standards as an entry to proficiency in reading and writing</p>	<p>*See second language students as having an added gift of a second language and not deficient because of their lack of English skills</p>

LEADERSHIP

All the people in a child's life play a role in their development and learning. The Independence School District Comprehensive Literacy Plan aims to support a community-wide approach to supporting and improving literacy outcomes.

A Role for Everyone

District Leaders

- Understand the importance of early learning and the role of child development in reading and writing development
- Commit guidance, support and resources to improve alignment, partnerships and pathways from birth to college and career

School Principals

- Understand the importance of school readiness and the processes, plans, and support necessary for successful transitions for students
- Champion a Culture of Literacy

Teachers across topic areas

- Commit to system-wide literacy goals
- Employ diverse instruction methods, including strategies for comprehension, accessing the text, and understanding difficult content specific specialized vocabulary

Parents, families, and caregivers

- Have the knowledge and skills needed to promote optimal child health, development and early learning
- Take an active role in their child's education and educational goals
- Become active partners in governance and provide input to help shape policies and systems
- Communicate the value and importance of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills with their children

Building and District Leaders

Building and district leaders are instrumental to developing a successful literacy system. The approach requires a common vision and coordination at all levels of the educational system.

Areas of focus for building and district leaders include:

- **Goals and Vision.** A common understanding and shared commitment to the desired future state (Vision) and the milestones towards the Vision (Goals).
- **Policies & Procedures.** Published documents that account for federal and state mandates and provide guidance for new and existing players within the system.
- **Funding & Resources.** Support the entire system and are critical to sustainability. Increasingly, both must be leveraged or shared to maximize scarce funding and human resources.
- **District & School Systems.** Key sites in the delivery of education and improving literacy.
- **Assessment and Data** Provide critical feedback on teacher effectiveness and students' strengths and weaknesses
- **Professional Development & Instructional Practices.** Learning opportunities that result in improved teacher, instructional leader, and district leadership knowledge and practice and most importantly, in improvements in student learning outcomes.
- **Core Curriculum & Supplemental Materials.** Content used for literacy instruction for all students and for intervention for those exceeding or not meeting benchmarks. The core curriculum is accessible to all students. Supplemental materials are used to help students meet the benchmarks.



Classroom Teachers and Educational Specialists

In achieving better literacy for all, the importance of teachers cannot be overstated. The Independence School District Comprehensive Literacy Plan is designed to support teachers at all

levels as they systematically work to support students' learning. As literacy is emphasized in the content areas, literacy becomes a shared expectation.

ISD's approach includes:

- Effective data-based decision making
- Assessment and feedback at all levels of the system
- Increased coordination and communication of teachers, caregivers, specialists, principals, and the district
- Data-informed planning and resource allocation
- Adaptive, differentiated instruction

Building Community/Family Support and Commitment

Parents and families are a child’s first teacher, and need to have the necessary support to help children “learn to learn” in their first years of life. Improved coordination between systems will improve literacy outcomes for children by providing resources and support for parents, families and caregivers.

ISD’s comprehensive system includes:

- **Family Engagement** - Multi-strategy communication with families to convey key literacy messages, such as nightly reading, screen-time minimization, adequate sleep, and a nutritious breakfast
 - Understandable and engaging to all parents (including expectant parents), families and caregivers
 - Incorporates home language and culture
 - Programs and activities to involve parents in the classroom
 - Strategies to improve parent skills and leadership so they can be active partners in, and advocate for their child’s education
- **Community Engagement** - Build community engagement in and support for literacy plan, including families, after school programs, libraries and tutoring/enrichment providers
 - Culturally and language appropriate information and referral system that addresses all aspects of child health and development

Parents and Caregivers

What can parents and caregivers do to support literacy at home?

Birth to School Entry Parents

- Read to your child and provide various types of books, such as stories, alphabet books, books with numbers, how-to books, books about different cultures or parts of the world, books written in family members’ native language
- When reading, ask the following questions:
 - What do you think this book is about?
 - What do you think will happen next?
 - Tell me about this story.
- Ask “open-ended” questions versus “yes/no” questions. For example, “Tell me what you liked best about this book” rather than “Did you like this book?”
- Provide writing and drawing tools that can be used indoors or outdoors
- Write out child's name calling out each letter
- Display pictures and posters with word labels (maps, animals, community)

- Provide opportunities for your child to write, acknowledging what is done
- Encourage children to develop fine motor skills by drawing pictures using shapes and colors
- Interact with your child to match letters and numbers

Elementary School Parents

- Read with your child and encourage and support reading outside of school
- Practice identifying letter names and sounds
- Read books to your child that build vocabulary and have more complex sentences than what they can read alone
- Talk with your child about the books you read together. Ask open-ended questions, talk about unfamiliar words, and help make connections to their world around them
- Limit screen time and prioritize reading and writing time
- Provide opportunities for your child to write, acknowledging what is done
- Talk about local, state, national, and world events. Encourage your child to listen and speak

Middle and High School Parents

- Expect and encourage reading at home for at least twenty minutes a day, five days a week
- Set an example for reading at home by reading yourself. Engage in book discussions with friends and family
- Provide access to appropriate books and reading materials at your child's level of difficulty and of high interest
- Talk to you child's teacher
- Encourage your child to participate in book clubs and discussions. Encourage your child to exchange books with friends and share ideas about what they have read
- Talk about and use vocabulary your child notices from reading
- Encourage your child to write about what they read and to write creative stories, poetry, notes to friends and family, or in a journal
- Limit screen time and prioritize reading and writing time
- Set aside a quiet study hour where parents/family members are reading or writing while children do homework
- Take an active interest in homework (e.g., look over their work and respond positively, check that the homework is finished, ask questions about what they have learned)
- Talk about local, state, national and world events. Encourage your child to listen and speak. Encourage older children to critique and analyze what they have read or heard

Classroom Self Assessment

PHASE 1: Exploration & Installation	PHASE 2: Implementation	PHASE 3: Innovation & Sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment plan devised for screening, diagnostic, and process monitoring assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers trained in how to use the assessment plan; this includes administering screening, skills diagnostics, progress monitoring and outcome based assessments and using the data to plan purposeful instruction and intervention <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy and learning needs identified based on assessment data analysis <input type="checkbox"/> Daily protected, uninterrupted literacy/core schedules created for all teachers K-6 and those teachers in grades 7-12 providing intervention for students not reaching benchmark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers fully trained to use instructional materials with fidelity <input type="checkbox"/> Screening assessments are used at the beginning of the school year <input type="checkbox"/> Process monitoring assessments are used <input type="checkbox"/> Universal access components of the core instructional materials in use <input type="checkbox"/> Diagnostic assessments are used when needed throughout the year <input type="checkbox"/> Content area teachers have learned and applied strategies for accessing the vocabulary and text <input type="checkbox"/> Protected and uninterrupted schedules are in place for instruction at all three levels of teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers have administered screening assessments at the beginning of the school year (based on need and grade level) <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers have administered progress monitoring assessments at least three times per year (based on need and grade level) <input type="checkbox"/> Diagnostic assessments have been administered when needed throughout the year <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic instruction: students received progress monitoring assessments every two weeks <input type="checkbox"/> Intensive instruction: students receive progress monitoring assessments every week <input type="checkbox"/> Core/literacy teachers have used the universal access components of the comprehensive instructional materials <input type="checkbox"/> Content area teachers have learned and applied literacy strategies

Building Self-Assessment

PHASE 1: Exploration & Installation	PHASE 2: Implementation	PHASE 3: Innovation & Sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy support established for every building <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy Focus Teams formed <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborative Grade Level Teams and schedule established <input type="checkbox"/> Plan for analyzing and utilizing school-wide assessment results. Plan should include collaboration among teachers and literacy support people. <input type="checkbox"/> Building level support and buy-in for literacy improvement plan <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers trained in scientifically based literacy research <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers trained in how to effectively use the core instructional materials and content area literacy material in alignment with effective instructional practices and the content learning standards <input type="checkbox"/> Heterogeneous classes formed through a collaborative process in all regular core literacy classrooms K-5 <input type="checkbox"/> Homogeneous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborative analysis of all assessment data and to plan effective instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Support for literacy plan implementation in place <input type="checkbox"/> Parents have supported the literacy endeavors at home and attended events and celebrations at school <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborative assessment analysis sessions are scheduled for building-level literacy focus <input type="checkbox"/> Teams (e.g., Collaborative Academic Support Team) meet at least three times per year <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborative Grade Level Teams are established and schedule for the year to come <input type="checkbox"/> Heterogeneous classes are formed through a collaborative process <input type="checkbox"/> Most qualified teachers and/or specialists are placed with students with the greatest needs <input type="checkbox"/> Suitable locations have been prepared to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers have collaboratively analyzed all assessment data and used the data to plan effective instruction (each marking period) <input type="checkbox"/> Students needing extra support beyond the core curriculum have received strategic instruction or intensive intervention <input type="checkbox"/> Instructional coaches have updated and assisted all literacy teachers with effective literacy instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Parents have supported the literacy endeavors and celebrations at school and home <input type="checkbox"/> All teachers have collaboratively used assessment results to decide which strategic or intensive students have no further need of interventions <input type="checkbox"/> A plan has been devised to closely monitor the progress of students who have been moved out of strategic or intensive intervention, to ensure that they continue to

<p>classrooms based on assessment data for those students in grades 6-12 requiring intensive intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Most qualified teachers placed with students with the greatest needs <input type="checkbox"/> Identify areas of growth with literacy integration across content areas 	<p>provide intensive intervention instruction</p>	<p>succeed in the more challenging atmosphere</p>
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District Self-Assessment

<p>PHASE 1: Exploration & Installation</p>	<p>PHASE 2: Implementation</p>	<p>PHASE 3: Innovation & Sustainability</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> District Literacy Leadership Committee formed and trained <input type="checkbox"/> District Literacy Cadre formed <input type="checkbox"/> Detailed job descriptions in place for building and literacy coaches (550s/Paras) and District Literacy Coordinator <input type="checkbox"/> District Literacy Coordinator hired and leading the implementation of District Literacy Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Aligned Literacy Mission Statement drafted <input type="checkbox"/> Core and content area instructional literacy materials aligned with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> All professional development sessions are scheduled for the year to come for teachers <input type="checkbox"/> Professional development on applying explicit, systematic instruction with active engagement and embedded checking for understanding in place <input type="checkbox"/> Professional development on analyzing and using assessment results to plan instruction in place <input type="checkbox"/> Professional development on using differentiated instruction and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Professional development has been provided to help new or continuing teachers fully utilize the core instructional materials with fidelity, including all components for universal access <input type="checkbox"/> Professional development has been provided to help intervention teachers utilize supplemental or intervention program materials <input type="checkbox"/> Professional development has been provided to help new or struggling teachers analyze and use assessment data effectively

<p>state standards and effective instructional strategies adopted or adapted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Plan for assessment data collection and management <input type="checkbox"/> Professional development sessions scheduled for the year <input type="checkbox"/> Most qualified principals placed in schools of greatest need <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in the Literacy System Analysis to identify opportunities to improve student achievement <input type="checkbox"/> Professional development should support results of Literacy Systems Analysis 	<p>flexible grouping techniques in place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The District Literacy Cadre has identified gaps in core instructional materials and has adopted or new supplementary materials for struggling readers or adapted/augmented materials as needed <input type="checkbox"/> District leaders have analyzed the assessment results and have used the information to monitor the effectiveness of the implementation and to determine needs for professional development, additional human and material resources, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Most qualified principals are placed in schools of greatest need <input type="checkbox"/> All available certificated personnel are mobilized to help with strategic or intensive intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Professional development has been provided to help teachers of strategic or intensive intervention students align instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Professional development has been provided to all teachers according to their area of need <input type="checkbox"/> District leaders have analyzed the student achievement data and have used the information to monitor the effectiveness of the implementation and to determine needs for the next year: professional development, additional human and material resources, etc.
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Action Plans

CLASSROOM LEVEL

Phase 1: **EXPLORATION & INSTALLATION** | Planning, Preparation and Professional Development

1. **Participate in Literacy Systems Analysis to identify opportunities to improve student outcomes.**
2. **Purposefully place students.** Work with the principal in analyzing all information available (assessments, teacher input, parent preferences) to best place students according to their needs.
3. **Make room in the day.** Dedicate core literacy instructional time every day through grade 6 and in classrooms that provide core literacy instruction in grades 7-12.
4. **Seek professional development opportunities.**
5. **Align core instructional materials to learning standards.** Identify skills not yet mastered and options to remedy gaps in instruction.

Phase 2: **IMPLEMENTATION** | Improving Instruction

1. **Use assessments for all students.**
 - a. **Progress Monitoring Assessments (formative).** Ideally to all literacy/core students in grades K-6 and any others with a history of poor literacy achievement
 - b. **Diagnostic Assessments (formative).** Identify students who are not responding to instruction and/or performed poorly on progress monitoring assessments
 - c. **Outcome Assessments (summative).** Missouri Assessment Program Grade Level English Languages Arts and English II End of Course Assessments
2. **Analyze assessment results.** Work collaboratively with other teachers to analyze results and use the results to plan instruction. If necessary, solicit support on implementing differentiated instruction.
3. **Plan and implement instruction.** Use findings from assessments to modify classroom instruction plans for those who are struggling. This may include flexible grouping for differentiated instruction or other techniques. Look for support and ideas from literacy coaches, specialists, para-educators, parents, tutors and other teachers.
4. **Use differentiated instruction.**
 - a. Teach the adopted/adapted instruction literacy program
 - b. Use flexible grouping strategies
5. **Embed checking for understanding.**
6. **Identify needed supplemental teaching materials.** Use assessment results to identify skills not yet mastered in the core instructional program and identify needs for

supplemental materials for strategic and intensive instruction. Plan for adoption and adaptation of supplemental resources.

7. **Equip families with knowledge to support literacy.** Provide information to parents on how to support literacy at home.

Phase 3: INNOVATION & SUSTAINABILITY | Full Implementation

1. **Schedule and protect literacy instructional time.** Create schedules that allow for sufficient protected, uninterrupted literacy core instructional time through grade 12. Allow for additional time for strategic instruction and even more time for intervention, depending on need.
2. **Core teachers collaborate to plan instruction.**
 - Administer diagnostic assessments when more information is needed.
 - Use flexible grouping strategies to reinforce core lessons and address instructional needs
 - Teachers administer and graph progress monitoring assessments every two weeks and adjust instruction accordingly.
 - Core teachers modify instruction for all students to assist those who are not responding to instruction.
 - Share data received; discuss instructional plan and time and resources needed to address literacy
3. **Move students receiving core instruction to intensive intervention as assessments indicate it is warranted.**
 - a. Teachers administer weekly progress monitoring assessment and adjust instruction immediately based on data.
 - b. Support staff administer progress monitoring assessments every two weeks and adjust instruction based on results, charting the growth to monitor progress
Grades K-5: Provide instruction in small groups of three or less
Grades 6-12: Provide instruction in groups of fifteen or less
4. **Evaluate progress made to determine if any students can be moved back to core instruction.**
 - a. Continue bimonthly progress monitoring for at least one quarter to ensure continued success
 - b. The goal of supplemental instruction is to move students back into core instruction.
5. **Administer literacy achievements at the end of the year with parents and families.**

BUILDING LEVEL | PRINCIPAL & BUILDING LEADERS

A principal may consider establishing a new position or creating committees to drive implementation. For example:

Literacy Focus Team

- Explore ways to support teachers and each grade level team
- Support collaboration

Literacy Grade Level Teams

- Support teachers in addressing the diverse needs of students

Literacy Coaches

- Support each core/literacy teacher as needed
- Focus on using core instructional materials with fidelity to meet the needs of all learners
- Work with the district-level leadership to discuss implementation and share strategies

When implementing a comprehensive literacy system, build on what is working and base all decisions on data, reviewing trends and targeting opportunities for improvement. Emphasize the expectation that all students can be successful.

Phase 1: EXPLORATION & INSTALLATION | Planning, Preparation & Professional Development

- 1. Participate in a Literacy Systems Analysis to identify opportunities to improve student outcomes.**
- 2. Purposefully place students.** Analyze all information available (assessments, teacher input, case worker input) to best place students according to their needs.
- 3. Ensure instructional time dedicated to literacy.** Work with teachers to ensure literacy instructional time every day through Grade 6 and in classrooms that provide core literacy instruction in Grades 7-12.
 - a. Schedule literacy time during mornings sessions to optimize learning
 - b. Consult with teachers and specialists to set up optimal class schedule
 - c. Use literacy data results to inform differentiated instruction
 - d. Review multiple data points to identify patterns
 - e. Choose a focus
 - i. Form critical questions
 - ii. Build a culture of teaching efficacy
- 4. Provide Summer Professional Development**

5. Build staff skills on use of assessments.

- a. Identify and provide training opportunities
- b. Encourage leadership training for mentor teachers and peer-to-peer training
- c. Support collaboration by scheduling common planning time

Phase 2: IMPLEMENTATION | Improving Instruction

- 1. Equip families with knowledge to support literacy.** Provide information to parents on how to support literacy at home. Involve parents in classroom and system-wide literacy celebrations.
- 2. Ensure consistent baseline training for all new teachers.**
 - a. How to use assessments
 - b. How to use core instructional materials
- 3. Develop strategies for content area teachers.** Work with content area teachers to develop strategies for incorporating purposeful literacy instruction (such as for test taking strategies).
- 4. Convene school-wide assessment meetings.** Discuss results and next steps as a group every 8-12 weeks.
- 5. Leverage parent support.** Involve parents in classroom and school-wide literacy endeavors.

Phase 3: INNOVATION & SUSTAINABILITY | Full Implementation

- 1. Purposefully place students.** Use all available assessment data and teacher recommendations to place students in the classrooms most likely to ensure their success.
- 2. Strategically deploy teaching talent.** When possible, place the most effective teachers with students demonstrating the greatest need.
 - a. Place teachers where they are most needed.
- 3. Encourage collaboration amongst the teaching staff.**
 - a. Identify opportunities for staff to support core/content area literacy teachers to address diverse literacy needs
 - b. Teachers analyze assessment results together to plan instruction
- 4. Schedule and protect literacy instructional time.** Create schedules that allow for sufficient, protected, uninterrupted literacy core instructional time through grade 12. Allow additional time for invention time, as needed.
- 5. Prepare for supplemental instruction.** Set up a location to have intervention and small group lessons/classes.
- 6. Engage parents in literacy efforts.**
 - a. Provide literacy seminar for parents; focus on ways to support literacy at home

- b. Consider training parents to be literacy tutors
 - c. Celebrate literacy achievements at the end of the year with parents and families.
7. **Plan ahead. Meet to discuss literacy needs for next year.**

DISTRICT LEVEL | LEADERS & ADMINISTRATORS

The district should consider establishing new positions or creating committees to drive implementation.

District Literacy Leadership Committee

- Analyze assessment data
- Monitor and evaluate Literacy Plan implementation
- Explore opportunities to increase support and capacity

District Instructional Coaches

- Facilitate cross-district professional development on the Science of Reading
- Facilitate literacy curriculum and assessment writing/review/revisions
- Facilitate building grade level teams focusing on instruction, intervention, and assessment data

Phase 1: EXPLORATION & INSTALLATION | Planning, Preparation, & Professional Development

1. **Participate in a Literacy Systems Analysis to identify opportunities to improve student outcomes.**
2. **Purposefully place students.** Analyze all information available (assessments, teacher input, case worker input) to best place students according to their needs.
3. **Cultivate support at the building level.** Visible commitment at the district level is critical for developing a system.
 - a. Provide training at the building level.
 - b. Establish district-wide goals.
4. **Make Literacy Coaching or Instructional Support Available.**
5. **Analyze assessment data.** Identify greatest needs in reading and writing by grade level for schools and system.
6. **Analyze and review core instructional materials.**
7. **Provide or facilitate training on five essential components of reading.** This could include training by district personnel or supporting peer-to-peer training amongst building-level staff.

- 8. Analyze core instructional materials for alignment with literacy objectives.** Identify options for adapting or augmenting core literacy materials to better meet literacy objectives.
- 9. Create an assessment plan.** The system-wide literacy assessment plan should integrate assessments for screening, progress/monitoring and diagnostic purposes.
- 10. Create a data collection plan.** The plan should provide enough detail to allow progress tracking, identifying trends and instructional needs, and informing strategies to improve student achievement.
- 11. Strategically deploy talent.** Use instructional and leadership talent at your discretion. When possible, link high performing teachers and principals to the classroom or buildings most in need.
- 12. Develop a Professional Development schedule.** Create a sequence of recommended training. For example:
 - Effectively using assessment data
 - Incorporating literacy into content areas
- 13. Set goals.** Include long-term and yearly sub-goals for the system and individual schools.

Professional Development

Effective professional development is essential to accomplishing one of our most pressing challenges: graduating students prepared with literacy skills and knowledge essential for college and career readiness.

Research shows that relying solely on stand-alone professional development will not yield the gains needed to close persistent achievement/opportunity gaps. A key to effective professional development is having a comprehensive plan that incrementally builds teacher and leadership knowledge and skills.

The Independence School District professional development plan provides job-embedded professional development as well as optional summer professional development. ISD's pre-kindergarten through grade 12 plan includes the following:

At the kindergarten through grade 5, literacy professional development is provided five days throughout the school year on cross district professional development days facilitated by the grade level district instructional coaches. These five days are supported by one building professional development session each month, facilitated by principals and building coaches with support provided by the district instructional coaches. Science of Reading podcasts are distributed twice monthly to teachers via email for their personal learning followed by optional video conference sessions held after school for teachers to discuss and expand their learning with peers.

Teachers collaborate with grade level colleagues one time per week to review literacy data and make adjustments to instruction. The building principal and building coach provide ongoing support. The building coach provides daily support working with teachers by planning, co-teaching, modeling lessons and providing small group instruction, when needed.

Secondary teachers receive professional development at the building level on vocabulary development. Science of Reading podcasts are distributed to teachers to provide an awareness of the Science of Reading and followed up with optional video conference sessions to discuss the learning.

During the summer, teachers new to the Independence School District are required to attend three days of Literacy Block training. Experienced teachers have opportunities to attend optional literacy sessions.

Timeline and Goals

Year 1 Goals: 2021-2022

- Revision and standardization of the Literacy Block PreK to 5
- Develop a comprehensive understanding of the SoR and how the brain learns to read
- Continue to develop the training model for understanding how the SoR and the ISD Literacy Model are implemented
- Intensive training and focus on the phonological awareness and phonics practices within Tier I instruction and implementation
 - SoR
 - Heggerty
 - LETRS
- Infuse explicit vocabulary instruction PreK to 12
 - Marzano
- Understand the role of small group instruction
- Building walkthroughs focusing on the most recent PD: phonological awareness, phonics and small group instruction
- Ongoing communication with middle and high school administrators about implementation

Year 2 Goals: 2022-2023

- Continued training and focus on phonological awareness and phonics practices within Tier 1 instruction and the role of small group instruction
- Emphasis on comprehension and fluency understanding and instruction and understanding how it all works together
- Instruction occurring with fidelity
- Building walkthroughs focusing on the most recent PD: phonological awareness, phonics,

small group instruction, comprehension and fluency

- Continue the discussion on implementation at middle and high school

Summer Goals: 2022

- Review the development of the training model for 2021-2022 for understanding the SoR and the ISD Literacy Model
- Planning training for implementation for secondary
- ISD induction model for training new staff is finalized and implemented
- Building induction expectations for new staff finalized and shared
 - Guidance will be provided to administrators

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