



Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement

Birth Through Grade 12

January 2018

Ohio | Department
of Education

Literacy arouses hopes, not only in society as a whole but also in the individual who is striving for fulfillment, happiness, and personal benefit by learning how to read and write. Literacy...means far more than learning how to read and write...The aim is to transmit...knowledge and promote social participation.

- **UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg, Germany: The Search for Solid Ground**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ohio's Plan to raise Literacy Achievement is not stagnant and is designed to act as a working document to meet state, regional and local needs for supporting language and literacy development.

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INTRODUCTION

From infants beginning to babble to children reading their first books to teenagers engaging in scientific inquiry, literacy skills lay the foundation upon which every individual's education depends. When a learner is provided the tools to develop strong language and literacy skills, they are enabled to confidently achieve personal autonomy and aspirations. Ohio is committed to supporting an education system that prioritizes the literacy development of **all** learners.

Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement serves as a guide to promote evidence-based language and literacy teaching and learning for all learners from birth to grade 12. Literacy acquisition affects learners' access to, and interest in, content at all grade levels and in all aspects of their lives. In light of this, literacy is not treated as a separate field of study or course but instead is layered over all aspects of education. It is critical that the focus of every educator and educational activity includes language and literacy development.

This plan articulates a cohesive state literacy framework aimed at promoting proficiency in reading, writing and oral language for all learners. The state's plan is driven by scientific research and encourages a professional movement toward implementing data-based, differentiated and evidence-based practices in educational settings throughout the state. Specifically, this plan illustrates the strong language and literacy efforts currently in place in Ohio and the vision to expand and strengthen them to support improvement across the educational cascade (state, regional, district, school, classroom, families and communities).

In 2012, Ohio established a literacy development framework within the context of the state's Striving Readers State Literacy Plan: *Reading into the Future*. This plan outlined a comprehensive systems approach to ensure reading achievement for Ohio's children from birth through grade 12. Examination of state data reveals, however, that many of Ohio's most vulnerable learners continue to struggle to read proficiently. As a result, Ohio re-examined this plan and the guidance that the state provides to regional supports, districts and early childhood providers in promoting evidence-based language and literacy development.

In 2017, Ohio convened a State Literacy Team comprised of birth through grade 12 stakeholders with unique expertise in language and literacy content, assessment, instruction, intervention, district and state professional learning design and/or program evaluation to collaborate on developing an updated state literacy plan.

The team recommended the following:

- Expand the existing State Systemic Improvement Plan focused on early literacy to include a birth to age 5 and middle and high school framework as guidance for local planning to improve language and literacy education;
- Capitalize on Ohio's system of support and the Ohio Improvement Process; and
- Align state, regional and local literacy efforts to establish a cohesive framework for language and literacy development for all learners.

Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement is based on these three recommendations. This plan is **not stagnant** and is designed to act as a **working document** to best meet

regional and local needs for supporting language and literacy development. The State Literacy Team will continue to convene on a yearly basis to review, analyze progress (state, regional and local) and revise the plan as needed to meet the needs of Ohio's diverse learners.

This plan is organized into eight sections:

1. Ohio's Theory of Action;
2. Alignment of Ohio's Literacy Improvement Efforts;
3. Comprehensive Needs Assessment;
4. Ohio's Literacy Vision;
5. Objectives, Strategies and Activities;
6. Goals and Measures;
7. Plan for Monitoring Progress; and
8. Implementing Evidence-Based Practices.

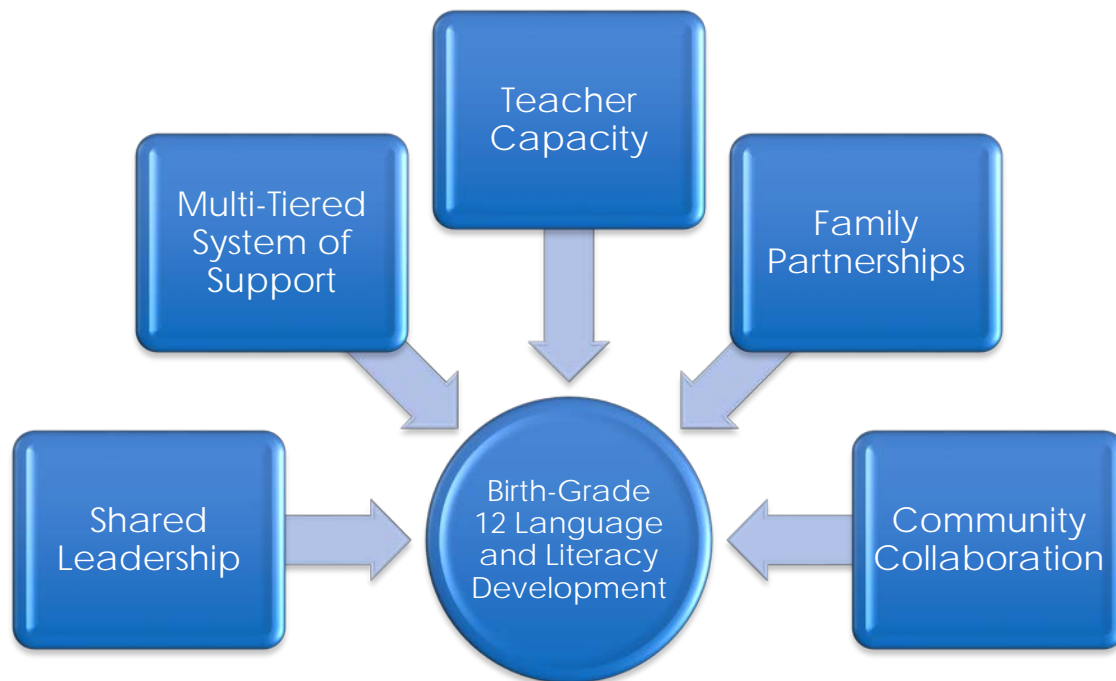
These eight sections are modeled after the Local Literacy Plan template. The Local Literacy Plan is developed by Early Childhood Providers and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) working to raise learner performance in literacy. By organizing Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement in this manner, the Ohio Department of Education strives to encourage and assist districts, community schools and early childhood providers in developing local plans that are both aligned to the state's plan and meet local needs.



SECTION 1: OHIO'S THEORY OF ACTION

Figure 1: Ohio's Theory of Action

Ohio's Theory of Action



To meet the needs of all learners in Ohio, state, regional and local leaders stand resolute that more must be done to ensure that all learners have access to high-quality language and literacy instruction and appropriate intervention from birth through grade 12. Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement capitalizes on and aligns to the state's current portfolio of literacy-related policies and practices (see page 11) and promotes evidence-based language and literacy instruction and intervention. To achieve this alignment, the state is cohesively coordinating and linking efforts to drive maximum impact through the following strands of action (see Figure 1).

These strands include:

- **Shared leadership;**
- **Multi-tiered system of supports;**
- **Teacher capacity;**
- **Family partnerships;**
- **Community collaboration.**

SHARED LEADERSHIP

Shared leadership structures are critical to the implementation of evidence-based instruction and intervention. Shared leadership means that responsibility for leading and supporting successful implementation of evidence-based strategies is the function of leadership at the district, building and classroom levels. This means that teachers are involved in the identification of the challenge, the causes of underperformance and the solutions to be implemented and perform leadership tasks in support of the improvement approach. This is accomplished through structures such as leadership teams (District Leadership Teams, Building Leadership Teams and Teacher-Based Teams) as described in the Ohio Improvement Process. These teams ensure shared accountability for data-driven strategic planning, implementation, feedback and plan adjustment.

This shared leadership structure supports the implementation of a continuum of evidence-based language and literacy core instruction and interventions and increases the likelihood of success. Shared leadership must be in place to support successful improvement efforts and nurture a deep understanding, clarity and focus for literacy improvement activity. Ohio's Plan for Raising Literacy Achievement addresses shared leadership through training and coaching on both evidence-based language and literacy practices and systems to support literacy improvement. This includes targeted training and resources for state and regional staff, administrators, principals, instructional coaches and teacher-leaders.

OHIO'S MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS

The multi-tiered system of supports structure provides a framework for supporting learners and staff as part of school improvement efforts. It outlines a coherent continuum of evidence-based, system-wide practices to address academic and behavioral needs, with frequent data-based monitoring for instructional decision-making to empower each learner to achieve high standards (Sansosti & Noltemeyer, 2008; Shores & Chester, 2008). A multi-tiered system of support can be utilized at the local, regional and state levels to address the varied, often complex needs of learners (Hayes & Lillenstein, 2015). Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement includes training and coaching for state, regional and district/school teams in screening, progress monitoring, instructional decision making (including Universal Design for Learning) and communicating with families within a multi-tiered system of support.

TEACHER CAPACITY

Ohio is committed to improving teacher capacity through focused, sustained and embedded professional learning and coaching in evidence-based language and literacy practices and interventions. Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement reflects the need for professional learning and resources designed to deepen educators' understanding of how children learn to read, diagnose why some children struggle and sharpen teachers' abilities to select and implement evidence-based practices and interventions. The Department also is partnering with the Ohio Department of Higher Education and institutions of higher learning to enhance teacher-preparation programs.

FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS

Family partnerships are critical to support learner progress and achievement in language and literacy development. Ohio's work focuses on the importance of building family partnerships by both early childhood (birth to age 5) and pre-kindergarten through grade 12 educational entities. Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement emphasizes how state, regional, and local educational entities can support the accessibility of information for families to address the needs of their children.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

The final component of Ohio's Theory of Action is community collaboration. Partnerships at the state, regional and local levels can help drive literacy improvement and keep in focus why proficient literacy skills are critical. Partnerships include networks that share successes and problems and practice and provide opportunities for those implementing literacy plans to consult with each other.

FIVE STRANDS OF ACTION

These five strands of action allow Ohio to take already existing policies and practices and significantly stimulate more positive and productive action. This will lay the groundwork for many more learners to become proficient readers. Ohio is working toward building capacity in all five strands to support all learners' access to high-quality evidence-based instruction and appropriate intervention. By tapping into current literacy policies, the Department can provide guidance and access to evidence-based instruction and intervention appropriate for birth to grade 12 learners.



SECTION 2: ALIGNMENT OF OHIO'S LITERACY IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

Ohio's Language and Literacy Drivers

There is perhaps no greater purpose for an education system than to provide *all* learners with effective evidence-based instruction to acquire language and literacy knowledge, skills and strategies so they can enjoy a full life of learning and success. Ohio maintains a portfolio of aligned policies and practices aimed at ensuring *all* learners acquire these critical literacy skills. The Department promotes alignment of all school improvement efforts into one comprehensive plan. Clear alignment of local literacy plans to other improvement activities and local improvement is critical.

Ohio's portfolio includes a variety of funding sources, legislation and other policy drivers.

OHIO'S LEARNING STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Ohio has developed high-quality, vertically-aligned English language arts learning standards that include:

- [Early Learning and Development Standards](#) (birth to kindergarten entry);
- [Ohio's Learning Standards for English Language Arts](#) (kindergarten-grade 12, including Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects grades 6-12);
- [Ohio English Language Proficiency Standards](#); and
- [Ohio's Learning Standards Extended](#) for learners with significant cognitive disabilities.

SYSTEM OF ASSESSMENTS

Ohio has developed a standards-aligned system of assessments that measure language and literacy development and outcomes using the:

- [Early Learning Assessment](#) for preschool-aged children;
- [Kindergarten Readiness Assessment](#) for learners entering kindergarten;
- [K-3 reading diagnostic assessments](#) used to screen students in grades kindergarten through grade 3 for reading difficulties;
- [Ohio's State Tests in English language arts for grades 3-8](#); and [high school end-of-course exams](#) in English language arts.

DATA COLLECTION

Ohio collects and analyzes unit-record literacy data that can be used to gauge progress, understand impact and guide policy development and continuous improvement. This data includes preschool through grade 12 literacy assessment information. Data is collected through the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and the Enterprise Application System (EAS).

ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM AND REPORT CARDS

Ohio has developed an accountability system and report cards that describe academic performance and learner achievement and growth data. The [K-3 Literacy Component](#)

stands as one element on the report card to shine light on proficiency rates *and* improvement among struggling readers.

OHIO IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

The Ohio Improvement Process ([OIP](#)) is a tested protocol and process supporting focused school improvement at the school level. In addition, OIP advances the state's [Reading Achievement Plan](#) to help districts identify learner needs, set goals, identify root causes, develop action plans and monitor continuous improvement.

STRONG REGIONAL SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS

Ohio has a strong regional system of supports which includes 16 regional [State Support Teams \(SSTs\)](#). Each state support team houses at least one Early Literacy Specialist in addition to school improvement consultants prekindergarten through grade 12. The early literacy specialists provide support and deliver literacy-improvement professional learning to districts across the state. In addition, 53 [Educational Service Centers](#) (ESCs) support literacy improvement, planning and implementation.

QUALITY PRESCHOOL

Ohio's [Step Up To Quality](#) rating system ensures all publicly-funded, birth to age 5 preschool and child-care programs provide effective learning and development supports. Step Up To Quality requires programs to implement ongoing screening and assessments to monitor learning and development across the standards including language and literacy. At the highest rating levels, early educators use assessment results to inform improvements to individual instruction.

OHIO'S THIRD GRADE READING GUARANTEE

To drive the movement of meeting the needs of struggling readers, Ohio's legislators enacted the [Third Grade Reading Guarantee](#) (2012). This legislation requires all districts and schools to screen learners in K-3 to determine whether the student is *on track* or *not on track* to read on grade level. Each learner identified as a struggling reader is required to receive a Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan to individualize reading instruction based on the learner's identified needs. The services provided through these individualized plans must be grounded in scientific evidence to ensure progress toward proficient reading for the learner. As part of Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement, the Department is updating guidance and resources associated with Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans to reflect the research associated with reading difficulties.

OHIO'S DYSLEXIA PILOT PROJECT

Ohio's Dyslexia Pilot Project operated for three years, beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, and involved eight school districts. The goal of the [pilot project](#) was to evaluate the effectiveness of early screening and reading assistance programs for children at risk for reading failure, including those learners exhibiting risk factors associated with dyslexia, and to evaluate whether those programs can reduce future special education costs. The external evaluator of the pilot found a *cost savings* attributable to the Pilot. In addition, all

participating school districts that met the requirements for the project in Year 3 demonstrated meaningful gains in learner rates of improvement that will likely be sustained. Over time, all school districts will have cost savings that exceed the initial investment (Morrison, 2015).

OHIO'S STATE SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SSIP): OHIO'S EARLY LITERACY PLAN

OHIO'S EARLY LITERACY PLAN

[Ohio's Early Literacy Plan](#) was developed by stakeholders from across Ohio utilizing the active implementation framework (Fixsen et al., 2013; National Implementation Research Network (NIRN), 2013). This group analyzed the framework's drivers, which include competency, organization and leadership to develop the goals and strategies that formed the basis for Ohio's early literacy logic model (see Appendices C1- C3). Stakeholders also reviewed the results of Ohio's Dyslexia Pilot Project to identify critical supports for implementation.

OHIO'S EARLY LITERACY PILOT

Ohio's Early Literacy Plan includes Ohio's Early Literacy Pilot, which supports teachers and leaders through two cohorts in 16 high-need districts in implementing evidence-based language and literacy strategies as part of their universal instruction and interventions. The pilot serves as the foundation for the design and implementation of evidence-based strategies contained in Ohio's Plan for Raising Literacy Achievement.

Ohio's Early Literacy Plan is undergoing an independent evaluation, conducted by an independent external evaluator. This evaluation will inform both the continuation of prekindergarten to grade 5 efforts and the development and implementation of a state-wide professional learning plan in language and literacy for birth to age 5 and middle and high school.

OHIO'S STATE PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT GRANT (SPDG)

Ohio received its third State Personnel Development Grant in August of 2017. With each iteration of the grant, the Department built upon the previous professional learning programming, with the goal of establishing a comprehensive, evidence-based and sustainable professional learning system for those who work with all learners, including students with disabilities. Through previous grant funding, the Department developed the Ohio Improvement Process. The Department also made efforts to improve educational leadership, remove the silos that exist between general education and special education, improve communication between district structures (e.g., teacher-based teams, building-level teams and leadership), and extend the use of data to inform decision-making.

Ohio's current iteration of the State Personnel Development Grant represents the convergence of (a) recent research on language and literacy core instruction and interventions; (b) advances in understanding of implementation research to further develop educators' competencies; and (c) a systemic approach to build capacity and

increase sustainability beyond the life of the project. Specifically, this grant will target districts serving English learners and students who have reading difficulties.

GUIDE FOR OHIO'S GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Taken together, the above portfolio of policies and practices drives Ohio's commitment to improving literacy outcomes for *all* learners. State leaders will continue to ensure that these efforts align with the goals and objectives of Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement (described in Section 5), as well as other school improvement efforts. This portfolio will continue to expand as the Department annually examines data and identifies targets for improvement.



SECTION 3: WHY A STATE COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY PLAN IS NEEDED/COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Ohio is focused on improving the language and literacy trajectory for all learners. This section outlines Ohio's comprehensive needs assessment. This needs assessment focuses first on learner performance data and then on the root cause analysis. This analysis illustrates the critical need in Ohio for explicit support for the implementation of evidence-based language and literacy instruction and intervention to improve learning outcomes, not only in the classroom but across the educational cascade (state, regional, district-school, grade levels, classroom, family, and community).

2017 LEARNER PERFORMANCE DATA

In 2017, Ohio's State Literacy Team examined specific data sources from birth through grade 12 to update the state's comprehensive needs assessment. The data is presented in order by grade bands (birth to age 5, kindergarten to grade 5, middle/high school). The team used these data as drivers for the development of the Theory of Action (described in Section 1) and the Logic Models for each grade band attached as appendices to this plan. The following outlines the data examined.

BIRTH THROUGH AGE 5

Ohio is a state where gaps in equity are evident from birth. A lack of prenatal care, maternal smoking and pre-term births result in an infant mortality rate in Ohio that is one of the highest in the nation, at 7.4 percent for all births. For black babies in Ohio, the infant mortality rate is nearly three times higher than the rate for white babies (2017 Ohio Infant Mortality Report). Ohio serves more than 21,000 infants and toddlers in Early Intervention, 60 percent of whom have substantial developmental delays at two standard deviations below the mean in at least one area of development, which include adaptive, cognitive, communication, physical, and social or emotional. Almost 27,000 children with disabilities receive educational interventions between ages 3 and 5 in preschool special education programs.

Poverty is linked with initial literacy exposure. The home literacy environment and number of books owned is correlated with socio-economic status of the parent(s) (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). In Ohio, one-fourth of all children under age 6 live in poverty, and one-half are below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level – an income bar that approximates "*economic disadvantage*" in the Ohio data system (2017 Ohio Poverty Report). In a nationwide study of American kindergarten children, 36 percent of parents with the lowest incomes reported reading to their children daily compared with 62 percent of parents with the highest incomes (Coley, 2002). Without early intervention, the disparities evident in these early years will widen and impact every aspect of a child's trajectory in language and literacy competency and academic and economic success.

SCHOOL AGE DISADVANTAGEMENT: KINDERGARTEN-GRADE 12

Consistent with parameters of the federal Striving Readers Grant, Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement recognizes four ways by which a learner may be considered "disadvantaged." Among Ohio's 1.6 million school age learners, **three out of every five**

(60 percent) fall into at least one category of disadvantage, and one-quarter (25.4 percent) fall into multiple categories.

READING ACHIEVEMENT DATA

Ohio administers assessments on reading achievement through several modes from kindergarten entry through high school graduation. Taken together, these data points (described below) illustrate the need in Ohio to support districts with evidence-based language and literacy instruction and intervention practices. Ohio is determined to make an impact with our most vulnerable learners.

The following data sources create the literacy landscape for Ohio.

KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

37.7 percent of entering kindergarten students (over 73,000) are not on track at the beginning of the school year in language and literacy.

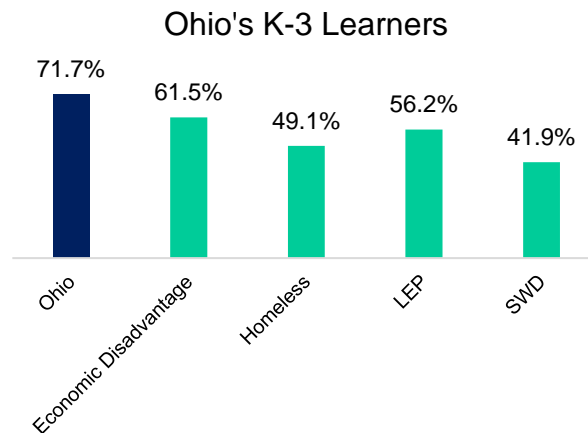
This data point from the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment reflects the need for literacy support services in prekindergarten settings. In Ohio, every child entering kindergarten in a public school is assessed with Ohio's Kindergarten Readiness Assessment across the essential areas of school readiness, including language and literacy. Children may be "demonstrating" (highest performance), "approaching" or "emerging" (lowest performance) in their overall kindergarten readiness. The outcome of demonstrating, approaching or emerging readiness considers all 50 items across the essential domains of school readiness. Examining language and literacy readiness with the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, only 62.3 percent of Ohio kindergartners are on track at the beginning of the school year in language and literacy. Research shows that without early intervention, these learners will continue to struggle as they progress through the early elementary years (K-3).

GRADES K-3 READING DIAGNOSTICS

28.3 percent of Ohio's K-3 students are not on track in the beginning of the school year in language and literacy. For certain subgroups, the rate is nearly 60 percent not on track.

All kindergarten to grade 3 learners in public schools are administered a reading screener at the beginning of each school year. Based on the results of these assessments, more than one quarter of Ohio's learners are not on track for reading on grade level. Subgroups show even greater need: 38.5 percent of Ohio's economically disadvantaged learners, 50.9 percent of Ohio's homeless learners, 43.8 percent of Ohio's English learners, and 58.1 percent of Ohio's students with disabilities are **not** reading on grade level. Figure 2 displays learners who are on track for reading on grade level.

Figure 2. Ohio's K to Grade 3 Learners on Track for Reading on Grade Level



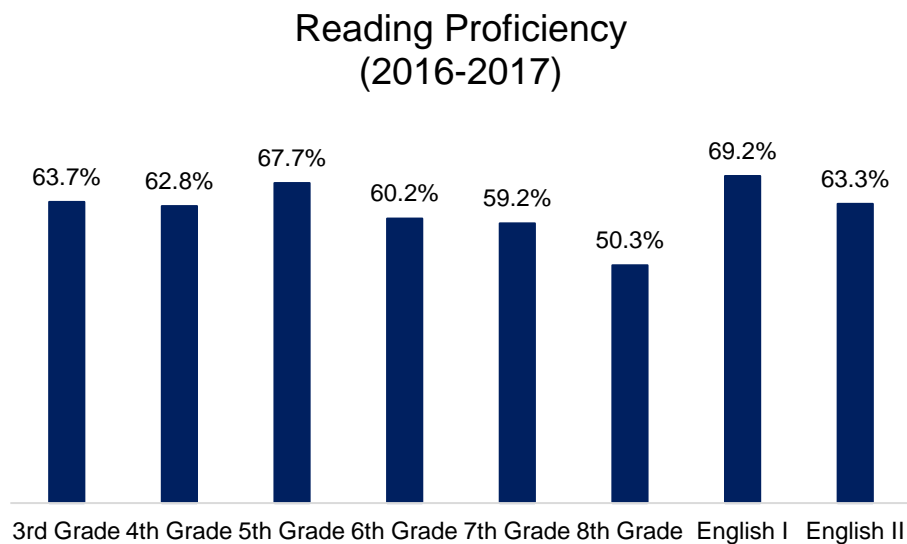
*LEP: Limited English Proficiency; SWD: Students with Disabilities

GRADES 3-12 STATE ASSESSMENTS

State assessments show that between 32 and 40 percent of students in grades 3-7 are not scoring proficient in English language arts. The percentage is higher – about 50 percent – in grade 8.

Statewide, slightly more than 370,000 learners were not proficient on the Ohio State Test in English language arts in grades 3-8. Among these struggling readers, 70.3 percent are economically disadvantaged, 28 percent have a disability, and 5.1 percent are students who are English learners. Figure 3 displays Ohio's learners' performance on state English language arts assessments in grades 3-8.

Figure 3. Reading Proficiency of Ohio Learners



GRADES 4 AND 8 NATIONAL ASSESSMENT FOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP)

NAEP data shows literacy deficiency in more than 60 percent of students in the 4-8 grade band.

Only 38 percent of Ohio's fourth-graders and 36 percent of eighth-graders scored at or above proficient on the reading portion of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). These percentages have remained relatively stable since 2007, ranging from 34 percent to 39 percent of learners scoring at or above proficient.

ACT

54 percent of graduating seniors taking the ACT do not meet the college-readiness benchmark for reading.

While 73 percent of Ohio's graduates took the ACT, only 54 percent met the benchmark (a score of 22) for reading. In Ohio, a benchmark score refers to a learner scoring at remediation-free levels set by Ohio's institutions of higher education.

OHIO ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT (OELPA)

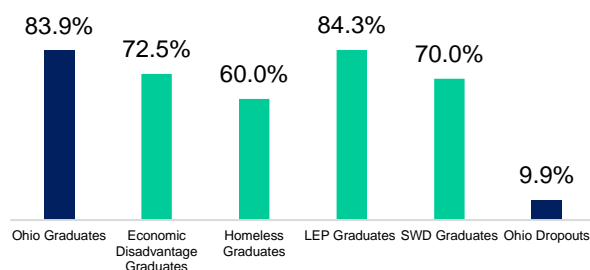
There are significant needs among the entire population of students who are English learners. More students who are English learners struggle in grades 7-12 (up to 90 percent) than in grades K-6 (up to 70 percent).

English learners in grades 7-12 scored lower on the Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment (OELPA) than elementary grade English learners. That is, 30-42 percent of English learners in grades kindergarten-grade 6 scored a 4 (Early Advanced) or 5 (Advanced) on the OELPA reading test, while only 11-17 percent of English learners in grades 7-12 scored a 4 or 5. This data points to a need for teachers of English learners in the middle through high school years to address specific and targeted literacy instruction.

GRADUATION AND DROP OUT

While 84 percent of Ohio's seniors in the class of 2016 graduated, these percentages are significantly lower for disadvantaged learners (except for limited English proficient students), as shown in Figure 4. Likewise, the overall dropout rate is just under 10 percent, though these numbers are higher for each subgroup.

Figure 4. Ohio's 2015-2016 Graduation and Dropout Rates



*LEP: Limited English Proficiency; SWD: Students with Disabilities

ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

To identify the needs of Ohio's learners, stakeholders participating in the development of the State's Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) engaged in a root cause analysis. A root cause analysis is a structured, facilitated team process aimed at identifying breakdowns in processes and systems that result in an undesirable outcome, such as low literacy achievement. The purpose of a root cause analysis is to find out what happened, why it happened, and determine what changes need to be made. The desired outcome is to identify the root cause of the problem (i.e., low literacy achievement).

The stakeholder team identified the following five areas as constituting the primary root causes of literacy underperformance. These are:

1. *Learners who "start behind, stay behind"* - The root cause analysis revealed that although learners may make progress in school (i.e. a year's worth of growth in one school year), students who begin kindergarten academically behind their peers generally remain behind throughout their school experience.
2. *District infrastructure/support for teachers* -The data and root cause analysis revealed that districts are challenged in providing effective support to teachers to support literacy instruction. Specifically:
 - District administrators are stretched thin and currently are experiencing initiative overload;
 - The bigger the district (and thus the further removed an individual classroom is from the central office), the less likely for a teacher to receive effective supports;
 - Districts often lack systems and structures that effectively plan for and implement evidence-based literacy instruction. This leads to district improvement plans that are driven by purchased programs that change frequently instead of identified evidence-based practices that can be implemented consistently;
 - There is a lack of early childhood programming and access to preschools which impacts students' readiness for kindergarten and earliest introduction to literacy development. This is due primarily to limited funding and resources.
3. *Instructional practices* - The root cause analysis revealed that districts were either not utilizing effective instructional practices or not implementing them with fidelity. Specifically, districts:
 - Used outdated special education and intervention practices;
 - Lacked differentiation in instruction at all tiers of instruction;
 - Continued the use of intervention(s), even when progress is not occurring;
 - Lacked effective progress monitoring and data literacy skills (i.e., how to analyze and use data to inform instruction);

- Had a limited understanding of how to build early literacy in young children; and
 - Lacked deep knowledge of Ohio’s Learning Standards for English language arts, particularly in foundational reading skills.
4. *District/Building Culture* - The root cause analysis revealed that the culture of the district and/or building often was not conducive to effective improvement. Specifically, districts and buildings:
- Lacked collaboration between special educators and general educators;
 - Lacked a collective belief that all children can learn and all teachers can teach; and
 - Lacked the implementation of proactive planning.
5. *Family Knowledge and Involvement* - The data and root cause analysis revealed that families were not being appropriately leveraged as partners in literacy improvement. Specifically, this includes:
- Lack of teacher and family partnerships; and
 - Lack of depth and/or meaning in family engagement interactions.

OHIO’S NEED DRIVES OHIO’S VISION

The above data reveals the need for Ohio to build the capacity to support evidence-based language and literacy instruction and intervention at the state, regional and local levels to improve outcomes for all learners with a focus on Ohio’s most disadvantaged learners, including those who are economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, homeless students and students who are English learners (birth through grade 12). Each child/student data point discussed above reveals a significant lack of literacy achievement across grade bands. The root cause analysis conducted by the State Systemic Improvement Plan stakeholder team focuses Ohio’s plan for addressing these significant needs. Specifically, the literacy vision outlined in Section 4 and the state activities outlined in Section 5 respond directly to the areas identified by the root cause analysis in an effort to raise literacy achievement in Ohio.

SECTION 4: OHIO'S LITERACY VISION

VISION STATEMENT: OHIO'S VISION IS FOR ALL LEARNERS TO ACQUIRE THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO READ AT GRADE LEVEL. THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND ITS PARTNERS WILL UTILIZE LITERACY ACQUISITION AND ACHIEVEMENT AS THE LEVER FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT. THE DEPARTMENT PROMOTES THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EVIDENCE-BASED SYSTEMS AND INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES TO INCREASE LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT ACROSS ALL CONTENT AREAS AND AGE LEVELS.

Literacy acquisition is necessary for all academic subjects and experiences and opportunities available after a learner has exited formal schooling. Under-developed literacy skills lead to under-achievement in all academic subjects and often affects school and social behavior (McGee, et al. 2002, Morgan, et al., 2008). In addition, reading difficulties have been associated with higher risks of depression, higher rates of dropping out, decreased likelihood of obtaining college degrees and lower levels of income (Miller, et al. 2010, Maughan, et al., 2003, Hernandez, 2012, McLaughlin, et al., 2014). It is imperative that Ohio's literacy vision be focused on helping more students master this essential knowledge by reducing barriers for literacy acquisition for all students and significantly increasing the number of learners attaining the language and literacy skills needed to be college and career ready.

Ohio's literacy vision is grounded in scientific research and evidence-based language and literacy practices. *All* learners are included in Ohio's vision and all learners will be supported to make progress in their literacy acquisition. To achieve this vision, Ohio is committed to:

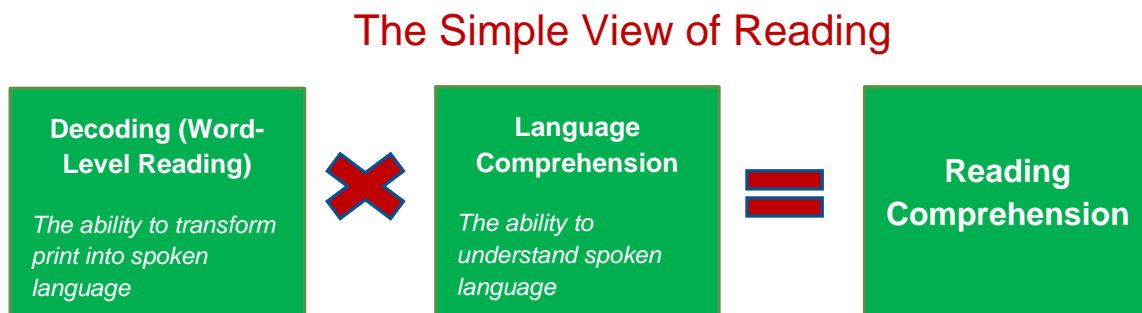
1. Using the **Simple View of Reading** (Gough & Tunmer, 1986) to drive all literacy content discourse, development and organization of resources necessary to support the state's comprehensive plan;
2. Ensuring all learners are represented and supported throughout **the language and literacy development continuum** (emergent literacy, early literacy, conventional literacy and adolescent literacy) and providing specific recommendations for struggling readers;
3. Enhancing **partnerships and collaboration** of general and special education practitioners and stakeholders; and
4. Enhancing **Ohio's infrastructure supports** to build implementation capacity at the state and regional levels.

The Department will communicate this literacy vision across the educational cascade to ensure alignment of literacy efforts across Department offices, state partners, regional supports, district, building and classroom implementation, family supports and community engagement. Literacy acquisition and achievement will serve as the lever for school improvement. The expectation is that all those who support Ohio's learners will engage in the implementation of high-quality evidence-based systems and instructional practices to increase achievement across all content areas and age levels to lead to college and career readiness for all learners in Ohio.

THE SIMPLE VIEW OF READING

Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement is grounded in the theoretical framework identified through Gough and Tunmer's (1986) Simple View of Reading (see Figure 5). The Simple View of Reading is a formula based on the widely accepted view that reading includes two basic components: decoding (word-level reading) and language comprehension. This formula has been supported and validated by several research studies. Ohio's root cause analysis (Section 3) indicates that *districts were either not utilizing effective instructional practices or not implementing them with fidelity*. Understanding the Simple View of Reading can help educators assess language and literacy strengths and weaknesses and thus plan and provide appropriate evidence-based instruction. Ohio is committed to provide guidance and support to ensure that all learners receive appropriate instruction in both components of the Simple View of Reading.

Figure 5. The Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986)



The Simple View of Reading drives all literacy content discourse and decisions of the State Literacy Team and is used to develop and organize resources necessary to support the state's comprehensive plan. For example, the State Literacy Team utilized the Simple View of Reading to develop the Birth to Age 5, Kindergarten to Grade 5, and Middle/High School Literacy Logic Models (see Appendices C1-C3). These logic models align with the five strands of Ohio's Theory of Action, as described in Section 1 (leadership, multi-tiered systems of support, teacher capacity, family partnerships and community collaboration). Each strand includes activities that build understanding of the Simple View of Reading. Additionally, the state and regional supports organize all professional learning and resource development using this framework (resources for curriculum auditing include utilizing this framework for analyzing organization, scope and sequence, and materials).

The literacy goal of the state's education system is to ensure that all children have access to high-quality, evidence-based language and literacy instruction and become proficient readers. This lofty goal only can occur if support is provided in **all** aspects of language and literacy instruction (Decoding and Language Comprehension) and if educational leaders and practitioners are supported at all levels of the educational cascade.

INCLUSION OF ALL LEARNERS IN THE LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT CONTINUUM

Literacy develops across a continuum as learners move through and between the phases of emergent literacy, early literacy, conventional literacy, and adolescent literacy (Figure 6). Many aspects of the phases overlap with one another and Ohio is committed to providing learners across the continuum individualized and differentiated support and instruction. Although some descriptions of these phases of literacy development include reference to age or grade level, Ohio's vision and plan is inclusive of all learners in all phases of literacy development regardless of age or grade level, and presumes competence for all learners.

Figure 6. Language and Literacy Development Continuum



PRESUMED COMPETENCE

Ohio is committed to the belief that all learners, no matter the complexity of their disability, have the potential to grow their skills and knowledge in language and literacy. “Inclusive education is characterized by presumed competence, authentic membership, full participation, reciprocal social relationships, and learning to high standards by all students with disabilities in age-appropriate general education classrooms, with supports provided to students and teachers to enable them to be successful” (NCIE, 2011). Foundational beliefs about learners are reinforced and maintained throughout Ohio’s Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement.

All learners have the right to actively participate and engage in instruction and assessment. Ohio is dedicated to designing this plan and other projects with the perspective that all learners are valued members of learning communities and should have designed access supports in place at the time of initial instruction, assessment and throughout tiered instruction, as needed. This plan includes learners who have the most complex needs, including those with significantly diverse intellectual abilities. This means that Ohio has high expectations for growth and achievement and focuses on abilities rather than disabilities (Jorgensen, 2005; Jorgensen, McSheehan, & Sonnenmeier, 2007).

EMERGENT LITERACY



Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement begins with the implementation of critical emergent literacy skills to build the foundation for early literacy. With the support of adults, all learners can engage in meaningful activities to develop skills as early as infancy and continue developing skills throughout the early childhood years. Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) define emergent literacy as the skills, knowledge and attitudes of pre-readers that relate to later forms of conventional reading and writing. Emergent literacy skills include the evidence-based,

literacy-related steps in phonological processing, print awareness and oral language a child takes prior to being able to read a text (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001). Researchers have established that these skills are facilitated through specific types of child interactions with the environment, their peers, caregivers and educators (Heath, 1982; Teale & Sulzby, 1986; Bowers & Vasilyeva, 2010; Guo, Justice, Kaderavek & McGinty, 2012; Girard, Girolametto, Weitzman & Greenberg, 2013). Appendix G illustrates three emergent literacy skills and how each skill relates to later conventional reading and writing.

EARLY LITERACY

Ohio's plan builds on emergent literacy skills to support more complex early literacy skills. Early literacy skills focus on decoding and recognition of words and language comprehension (the Simple View of Reading) and are the foundations that lead to the development of proficient literacy skills. Such skills are represented in Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards, Ohio's Learning Standards for English Language Arts and Ohio's Extended Standards for English Language Arts. Early literacy skills include some emergent literacy skills (such as the three listed



above), as well as conventional literacy skills such as decoding and fluency (NELP, 2008). The [National Early Literacy Panel](#) identified six literacy variables that have a medium to large predictive relationship with later measures of literacy development (see left side of Appendix H) and five variables that are moderately correlated with at least one measure of later literacy achievement (see right side of Appendix H). Ohio utilizes the research supporting these 11 variables when developing evidence-based resources to support emergent and early language and literacy development. Mastery of these early skills leads to successful application of conventional literacy skills.

CONVENTIONAL LITERACY

Conventional literacy skills refer to skills such as decoding, oral reading fluency, reading comprehension, writing and spelling (NELP, 2009). These skills have been identified as those provided in elementary and secondary literacy learning and represented in Ohio's Learning Standards for English language arts in kindergarten through grade 5 and in Ohio's Extended Standards for English Language Arts in grades kindergarten



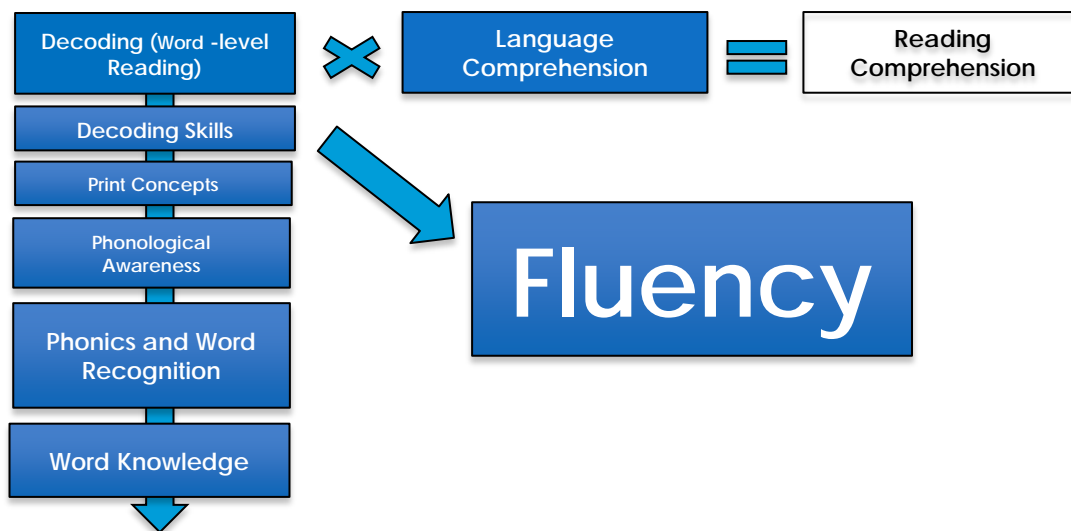
through grade 5. The National Reading Panel (2000) refers to these skills as the Five Components of Reading: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary and Comprehension. Figures 7 and 8 represent how the five components of reading, and other research-supported components, fit within the Simple View of Reading.

Illustrated in Figure 7 are the skills needed to master decoding/word-level reading. These skills include the following:

- **Print concepts** or understanding the organization and basic features of print. For example, for young children this includes recognizing environmental print and understanding that print has meaning. In older children, this may include recognizing paragraphs, headings, chapters, etc. When looking at text, the learner understands the way it is organized;
- **Phonological awareness** which includes the awareness of the speech sound system (words, syllables, onset-rime, first-sounds and phonemes). Included under the umbrella of phonological awareness is **phonemic awareness**, the awareness of individual phonemes (smallest sound unit of speech);
- **Phonics and word recognition** that apply to letter-sound correspondence and word analysis skills (patterns of spelling); and
- **Word knowledge** which includes building sight vocabulary, allowing for instant and effortless retrieval of words, including both regularly and irregularly spelled words.

Achieving proficiency in decoding/word-level reading leads to word reading fluency. **Fluency** is defined as reading with sufficient accuracy, rate and expression to support comprehension (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006). These are the skills that learners in the conventional literacy phase are practicing as they read. Learners who struggle need additional practice and support in these areas.

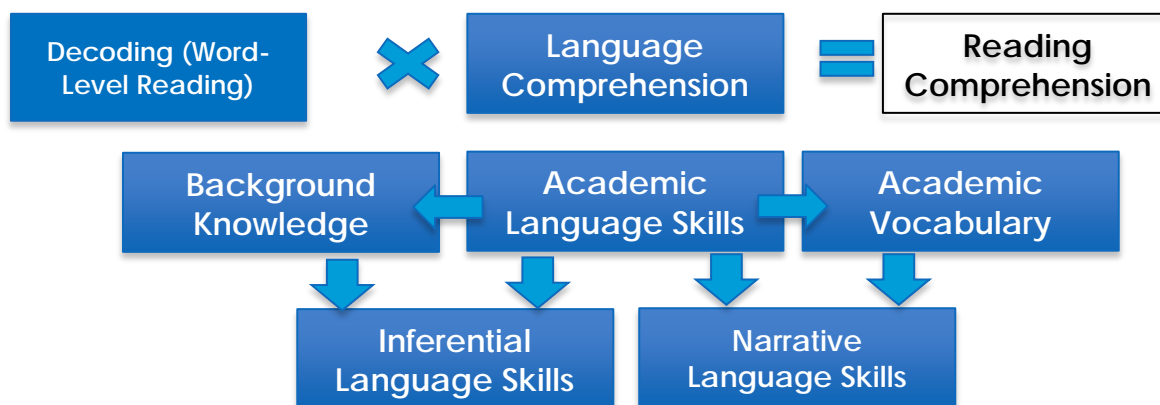
Figure 7. Word-level Reading in the Simple View of Reading.



A deeper look into the two components of the Simple View of Reading reveals that language comprehension is mostly influenced by academic language skills. Academic language skills are the education system's formal communication structure and include words common in books and school. To build these skills, educators focus on building background knowledge and supporting academic vocabulary (see Figure 8).

Increased background knowledge and academic vocabulary across grade levels and subjects will drive learners' abilities to exhibit inferential and narrative language skills. The greater the academic vocabulary, the greater the ability to comprehend words in text and use words in formal writing. The greater the background knowledge, the greater the ability to discuss topics beyond the immediate context. Promoting academic language skills is critical across content areas and must be supported across the continuum of literacy development.

Figure 8. Language Comprehension in the Simple View of Reading.



The critical literacy skills identified through the Simple View of Reading framework are represented throughout Ohio's Learning Standards for English Language Arts in kindergarten through grade 5. In addition, they are evident in Ohio's Extended Standards

for English Language Arts in grades kindergarten through grade 5: Foundational Skills, Speaking and Listening, Language, Literature, Informational Text, and Writing.

Though all grades K-5 contain standards pertaining to each critical literacy skill, the emphasis of instruction shifts throughout the grade levels as learners progress toward proficiency. Appendix I depicts the general subskills within each of the five components of reading that are emphasized (highlighted in green) as learners move through the elementary grades. It must be noted that learners who are not progressing in a typical manner will continue to need targeted support in the earlier subskill. Mastery of these skills will lead to greater success in the adolescent years. However, Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement stresses the importance of continuing to target these skills for learners who struggle regardless of grade level and into middle/high school.

ADOLESCENT LITERACY

Adolescent literacy skills begin to build upon conventional literacy skills around grade 4 and continue through high school when learners face increasingly complex texts in different disciplines. Academic language and disciplinary texts become increasingly complex and learners need to read, write, understand, interpret and discuss multiple texts across contexts (IRA, 2012). To meet the needs of learners in this phase of the Language and Literacy Development Continuum,



districts and schools implement strategic evidence-based practices and academic language **across content areas**, provide instruction and support that is **discipline specific** and provide **individualized intensive intervention** as needed.

Strategic evidence-based practices (Appendix J), especially related to explicit vocabulary and comprehension strategy instruction, are used consistently **across content areas** to support learners' acquisition of knowledge in the various content areas (Kamil, Borman, Dole, Kral, Salinger, & Torgesen, 2008). This is not meant to turn content area teachers into reading teachers but to ensure learners learn to read, comprehend and interpret content area text (Denton, 2012). When learners are supported in using common evidence-based strategies across the content areas, the depth and breadth of the content covered can be increased (Kamil, et al., 2008).

Beyond vocabulary and comprehension strategies, recent research also has linked adolescents' academic language skills with reading comprehension (Uccelli & Galloway, 2017). For example, some of these skills include unpacking morphologically complex words, recognizing linguistic markers of arguments, and tracking themes and participants within complex texts - all skills aligned with the challenges of increasingly complex texts adolescents face in school. Taken together, strategic vocabulary, comprehension and academic language support builds robust student language skills that work across content areas.

Though some academic language skills work across content areas, academic disciplines contain their own specialized vocabularies, text genres, warrants for arguments, and citation styles—features linked to the types of knowledge unique to the discipline (Goldman et al., 2016). This suggests that teachers in those disciplines are best suited to teach students how to analyze, evaluate and create such texts (Denton, 2012).

Disciplinary literacy moves beyond the common strategies used across all content areas and focuses on the unique strategies experts use to engage with text in that discipline (Shanahan, 2012). Ohio’s Learning Standards for English Language Arts include the strand *Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects 6-12*. These learning standards require the learner to not only utilize common literacy strategies but develop a keen sense of the discipline-specific strategies used to convey knowledge in that discipline. These strategies are based on how an expert in this discipline would read and use the text, which differs greatly across disciplines (Shanahan, 2012). For example, disciplinary literacy in history requires a deep understanding of source contextualization, disciplinary literacy in literature invites a sensitivity to literary devices, and disciplinary literacy in science demands analyzing how tables and figures intersect with accompanying text. When learners are able to access text using both general and discipline-specific academic literacies, they will have increased opportunities to successfully read, write, understand and interpret, and discuss multiple texts across contexts.

In addition to implementing strategic evidence-based practices across content areas and discipline-specific strategies, some learners will require and must be provided **individualized intensive interventions provided by trained specialists**. Inability to read at grade level in the secondary setting may be caused by a variety and combination of factors (decoding, academic language, motivation, vocabulary, background knowledge, comprehension) and must be addressed through explicit instruction and interventions. The chosen interventions are guided by appropriate assessments (diagnostic and flexibly designed for access) to identify learning and motivational needs and provide an individualized intervention that includes an explicit instructional focus that meets those needs (Kamil, et al. 2008). This individualized intensive intervention is meant to *accelerate* learning so learners can make substantial progress toward reading successfully in their content area classes and increase their motivation to read. This means that the learner must progress at a faster rate than is typically expected in the amount of time instruction is occurring (Denton, 2012).

STRUGGLING READERS

As illustrated in the state's needs assessment (Section 3), Ohio's struggling learners are represented across each phase of the literacy continuum (emergent through adolescent). Many learners in Ohio struggle to learn to read and do not adequately acquire conventional literacy skills before entering middle and high school. Nearly a quarter of learners in K-3 are reported as *not on track* for reading on grade level and nearly 50 percent of learners are not reading proficiently at the end of eighth grade. More than 350,000 learners in Ohio are not reading proficiently in grade 3 through high school.

In addition to the student data presented above, the root cause analysis (Section 3) indicates that *learners who “start behind, stay behind”* and many districts were either not

utilizing effective instructional practices or not implementing them with fidelity. Specifically, the root cause analysis indicates that many districts use outdated special education and intervention practices, lack differentiation in instruction at all tiers of instruction, continue the use of intervention(s) even when progress is not occurring, and lack effective progress monitoring and data literacy skills (i.e., how to analyze and use data to inform instruction). This data suggests an urgent need to address struggling readers in Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement.

Utilizing evidence-based language and literacy practices supported by scientific research is critical when working with learners struggling to learn to read. To meet the needs of all learners, change the trajectory of struggling learners and drastically improve the state's literacy achievement, educators across Ohio's educational cascade (state, regional and local) must commit to a collective movement of implementing scientifically proven instructional practices that meet the individual needs of learners. Specifically, learner needs must be prioritized over default practices or long-held personal beliefs about what strategies work for learners. The choices made for learners must be driven by research and data (Kilpatrick, 2015). As this collective efficacy builds, Ohio's educators will transform struggling readers into proficient readers.

TYPES OF READING DIFFICULTIES

For educators to determine which scientifically proven method to use when working with a learner who is struggling to read, the type of reading difficulty the learner is experiencing must be understood. Research supports three types of reading difficulties under the Simple View of Reading. The reader with typical or proficient skills is strong in both word reading and language comprehension (see Figure 9). The reader characterized as having a **phonological difficulty** is weak in word reading but strong in language comprehension. The reader characterized as having a **language difficulty** is strong in word reading but weak in language comprehension, and the reader with a **mixed reading difficulty** is weak in both word reading and language comprehension (Kilpatrick, 2015; Compton, et al., 2014). It is important to note that like the Simple View of Reading, this is a *simple* model and each learner has individualized needs that must be addressed through assessment and instruction.

*Figure 9. Types of Reading Difficulties Organized Under the Simple View of Reading (Adapted from *Essentials of Assessing, Preventing, and Overcoming Reading Difficulties*, Kilpatrick, 2015)*

		Language Comprehension	
		Strong	Weak
Word Reading	Strong	Typical Reader	Language Difficulties
	Weak	Phonological Difficulties	Mixed Reading Difficulty

It's important for educators to recognize the differences and implications associated with each type of struggling reader. Assessments used for diagnostic purposes and progress monitoring, placement and exit criteria (also known as *decision rules*), as well as the likelihood of success in core instruction or with a specific intervention, are tied to the needs of the learner.

- Learners with difficulties that are characterized as phonological will require assessments of word-level reading broken down by the skills needed in word-level reading (decoding, phonological skills including phonemic awareness, letter-sound knowledge, rapid automatic naming, etc.) and interventions directly associated with the teachable word-level reading skill;
- Learners with difficulties that are characterized as a language difficulty require more language-oriented assessments and interventions associated with linguistic comprehension (vocabulary, background knowledge, working memory, inferencing and comprehension monitoring); and
- Learners who experience mixed reading difficulty will require diagnostic assessments in both word-level reading and language comprehension, as well as interventions addressing both needs.

STATE PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION OF GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION PRACTITIONERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The root cause analysis (Section 3) indicates that the *culture of districts and/or buildings often is not conducive to effective improvement* due to a lack of collaboration between special educators and general educators, lack of a collective belief that all children can learn and all teachers can teach and lack of implementation of proactive planning.

Ensuring that *all* learners have access to high-quality language and literacy instruction requires general education and special education practitioners, to work collaboratively to plan, implement, and review all literacy efforts using the **Integrated Comprehensive Systems** as a framework to grow skills for all learners. Integrated Comprehensive Systems are centered around four cornerstones:

1. Focusing on equity and best practices;
2. Establishing equitable structures: location and arrangement of students and staff;
3. Implementing change by leveraging funding and regulations in support of proactive service delivery; and
4. Establishing access to high-quality teaching and learning for ALL learners through developing teacher capacity (Frattura & Capper, 2014).

Specifically, at the **state** level, this is accomplished through partnerships between the Department and other state agencies that support birth through grade 12 learners. Partner agencies include, but are not limited to:

- Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence;
- The Outreach Center for Deafness and Blindness;
- Ohio's 16 State Support Teams;
- Ohio Department of Job and Family Services;

- Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities;
- Ohio's Center for Deafness and Blindness;
- Office of Ohio Governor John R. Kasich;
- Educational Service Centers;
- Institutions of Higher Education;
- Early Childhood Specialists; and
- Parent and Family Engagement Specialists.

In addition, the Department will promote partnerships between regional support structures, national experts in the field of language and literacy development, local districts, families and communities to increase literacy achievement for all learners. Ohio is dedicated to the continued movement forward of statewide efforts in growing inclusive and equitable practices by all education professionals for all learners with increasingly diverse strengths and needs.

INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT OHIO'S LITERACY VISION

The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), emphasizes the use of evidence-based practices. The Department is committed to not only identifying these practices for educational entities in Ohio but also supporting their implementation.

Under Ohio's State Systemic Improvement Plan (Ohio's Early Literacy Plan) Ohio improved its infrastructure to support the implementation of evidence-based language and literacy practices. This infrastructure improvement included the hiring of a state literacy administrator, regional early literacy specialists at all 16 State Support Teams, and a realignment of the scope of work for specific staff in the Center for Curriculum and Assessment, Office of Early Learning and School Readiness and Office for Exceptional Children (Ohio Department of Education, 2016). These changes to infrastructure allowed the Department to support Ohio's Early Literacy Pilot across 16 districts and across internal offices.

For the Department to meet the needs of all of Ohio's districts, schools and early childhood providers, it must continue to improve the infrastructure that supports literacy improvement throughout the state. Infrastructure improvement includes enhancing both state level and regional supports for literacy improvement.

ENHANCING STATE-LEVEL STAFF SUPPORT FOR LITERACY IMPROVEMENT

The Department is committed to developing and implementing intra-agency and cross agency literacy improvement efforts. Part of this plan includes the appointment of an early literacy administrator within the Center for Curriculum and Assessment who leads an intra-agency early literacy team. This team consists of staff organized through a functional table of organization (see Appendix F) from the Center for Curriculum and Assessment, Office of Early Learning and School Readiness, Office for Exceptional Children and Office of Data Quality and Governance.

The Department is committed to supporting experienced literacy program leaders and staff dedicated to language and literacy initiatives through collaboration of intra-agency staff and external agencies or offices.

The intra-agency literacy team will be expanded to provide supports across the Language and Literacy Development Continuum (emergent literacy, early literacy, conventional literacy and adolescent literacy) and will provide support around implementation, and evaluation, including data collection, analysis, and reporting. This intra-agency literacy team will be dedicated to the state's literacy improvement work while ensuring authentic intra-agency communication, aligned work, fiscal support and collaboration across offices and expertise.

REGIONAL SUPPORT STRUCTURE

The Department currently supports 18 regional early literacy specialists in the 16 state support teams. Through the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant, two adolescent literacy specialists will be added to this team of specialists. In addition, the Department is prioritizing its offerings of professional learning and support services to Education Service Centers, State Support Teams, and Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. Professional learning will focus on birth to grade 12 evidence-based system support and language and literacy practices. The Department is committed to increasing the capacity of the regional system to provide global, targeted and intensive support to local educational entities.

NETWORKING

A key element of the support system will be facilitating the networking of LEAs around local literacy plan development and implementation. Evidence supports the power of networking for creating a support infrastructure for successful implementation (Bryk, Gomez, Grunow & LeMahieu, 2015). Networking infrastructure allows organizations focused on a similar challenge or problem, or implementing comparable strategies to consult with each other, share successes, share problems of practice, and provide real time support for implementation and continuous improvement. Ohio will facilitate, in collaboration with consortia leads, regional Education Service Centers and State Support Teams, networks that produce and use evidence-based language and literacy knowledge to stimulate effective implementation and feedback.

SUPPORTING OHIO'S VISION

Ohio's commitment to develop and sustain these four foundational strategies (Simple View of Reading, an aligned Language and Literacy Development Continuum, educational partnerships and a state infrastructure to support the literacy vision) illustrates the dedication to provide high-quality support for Ohio's educational systems. The Department and its partners will provide guidance and technical assistance to early childhood providers and district and community leaders to promote the implementation of evidence-based systems and instructional practices to increase learner achievement. To do this, Ohio has outlined the objectives, strategies and activities in Section 5.

SECTION 5: OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement includes a set of state-level activities designed to support and provide technical assistance to districts and early childhood providers and collect data and other information to drive continuous improvement and state, regional and local efforts. These objectives, and their alignment to Ohio's Theory of Action, are outlined below.

Objectives

Efforts to achieve Ohio's vision for the **Comprehensive State Literacy Plan** are focused on the following four **objectives**:

1. Support data driven decision-making and planning through engagement in the Ohio Improvement Process;
2. Ensure Local Education Agencies (LEAs) (particularly in the context of consortia) develop evidence-based language and literacy plans. These plans should be aligned to the state plan, aligned to other school improvement efforts in the LEA, and be sustainable based on creating increased capacity;
3. Support the fidelity of implementation of evidence-based language and literacy practices; and
4. Provide financial support to literacy improvement efforts and help identify sustainable practices.

Ohio is committed to providing support across the educational cascade to increase literacy achievement throughout the state (classroom, building, district, regions and the state). To achieve the above objectives, Ohio is focusing on five components outlined in Ohio's Theory of Action (Appendix B).

- Through **shared leadership**, educational entities will use **proven practices** to provide language and literacy instruction and interventions to all learners.
- Educational entities will implement a **Multi-Tiered System of Supports** with fidelity and make **data driven decisions** to meet the needs of all learners.
- Through **increasing teacher capacity**, all learners will have access to high-quality, evidence-based language and literacy instruction with interventions to meet their individual needs.
- **Families** will be more equipped, empowered and engaged partners in the language and literacy development of their children.
- **Community collaboration** will allow for more children to experience language-rich literacy based environments outside of school and prior to entering school.

OBJECTIVE 1: SUPPORT DATA DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING THROUGH ENGAGEMENT IN THE OHIO IMPROVEMENT PROCESS.

*Strategy 1: **Capacity for Data Driven Decision-making***: Engage educational leaders in professional learning focused on utilizing language and literacy data to drive decision-making in district leadership teams and building leadership teams through a tiered support approach.

Strategy 2: Engage educators in professional learning focused on utilizing language and literacy data to drive decision-making in teacher-based teams through a tiered-support approach.

State Activities:

- Technical Assistance Webinars: Develop and provide technical assistance webinars on analysis of literacy data for district leadership teams, early childhood providers, building teams and teacher-based teams.
- Targeted Technical Assistance: Regional support teams develop and provide targeted technical assistance and coaching for building leadership teams, focused on support for teacher -based Teams.
- Individualized Technical Assistance Plans: Regional early literacy specialists develop individualized technical assistance plans for high-needs local districts, schools and early childhood providers developing actions to move from data and decisions to implementation. Supports help ensure implementation with fidelity and building sustainability.

OBJECTIVE 2: ENSURE LEAS DEVELOP EVIDENCE-BASED LANGUAGE AND LITERACY PLANS ALIGNED TO THE STATE PLAN, ALIGNED TO DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT PLAN, AND ABLE TO BE SUSTAINED.

Strategy 1: Plan Development Technical Assistance: Provide educational leaders technical assistance focused on understanding the state's comprehensive literacy plan and developing a local literacy plan through a tiered-support approach.

Strategy 2: State Evidence Based Clearinghouse: Develop language and literacy tools and resources for the state-wide evidence-based clearinghouse.

State Activities

- Local literacy plan support for all: Develop and provide technical assistance webinars on Reading Achievement Plans for districts, schools and early childhood providers.
- Local literacy plan targeted support: Regional support teams develop and provide targeted technical assistance for LEAs developing Reading Achievement Plans.
- Local literacy plan intensive support: Regional early literacy specialists develop individualized technical assistance plans for high-need local districts, schools and early childhood providers developing Reading Achievement Plans.
- Resources and tools: The Department's intra-agency literacy team will work with the Office of Research, Evaluation and Advanced Analytics to develop and identify the language and literacy resources and tools to be included in Ohio's Evidence-Based Clearinghouse.
- Annual Literacy Academy: The Department's intra-agency team will plan and execute an annual literacy academy addressing theoretical frameworks for learning to read (including brain research), structure for effective leadership, content elaboration and best practices for data analysis, and planning instruction and intervention.

OBJECTIVE 3: SUPPORT THE FIDELITY OF IMPLEMENTATION OF EVIDENCE-BASED LANGUAGE AND LITERACY PRACTICES

Strategy 1: Professional Development Supporting Evidence-Based Leadership Practices: Engage educational leaders in professional learning focused on evidence-based leadership practices and evidence-based systems to support educator implementation of language and literacy development through a tiered-support approach.

Strategy 2: Professional Development Supporting Evidence-Based Teaching Practices: Engage educators in professional learning focused on the implementation of evidence-based language and literacy practices through a tiered-support approach.

Strategy 3: Provide Family Engagement Opportunities: Engage families across the state in opportunities to support evidence-based language and literacy practices at home through a tiered-support approach.

Strategy 4: Support stakeholder and community partnerships and engagement. Engage stakeholders and community partners in the development and implementation of literacy-improvement efforts.

State Activities

- Leadership practices support for all: Develop and provide a professional learning series for school administrators and early childhood providers in leadership practices to promote language and literacy development.
- Leadership practices targeted/intensive support: Provide in-person professional learning and coaching to school administrators and early childhood providers in leadership practices to promote language and literacy development.
- Instructional and systems coaching support for all: Develop and provide a professional learning series for school administrators and literacy coaches in instructional and systems coaching.
- Targeted support for Ohio Improvement Process implementation: Develop and provide targeted support in the implementation of the Ohio Improvement Process with a focus on evidence-based literacy practices.
- Multi-Tiered System of Support support for all regions: Provide professional learning on a literacy specific Multi-Tiered Systems of Support needs assessment (Reading Tiered Fidelity Inventory) that assesses teams, implementation of tiered instruction, evaluation and resources to regional staff throughout the state.
- Multi-Tiered System of Support targeted support: Develop and provide professional learning to support regional staff in utilizing the data from the Reading Tiered Fidelity Inventory to drive both system and instructional change in the districts and schools that they serve within the Ohio Improvement Process framework.
- Multi-Tiered System of Support targeted and intensive support: Provide professional learning, support, and coaching services to districts and schools in the administration and interpretation of a literacy specific Multi-Tiered System of Support needs assessment.

- Teacher capacity support for all: Develop electronic (web-based) infrastructure to support sharing of evidence-based literacy instructional practices.
- Teacher capacity support for all regions: Develop a regional network of literacy specialists to increase capacity to support districts in implementing evidence-based literacy practices throughout the state.
- Teacher capacity targeted and intensive support: Pilot professional learning and coaching (instructional and systems) opportunities with school teams in evidence-based language and literacy strategies, addressing each essential component of reading instruction and writing through Ohio's State Systemic Improvement Plan (Ohio's Early Literacy Plan).
- Teacher capacity targeted and intensive support: Coach teams in evidence based language and literacy strategies, addressing each essential component of reading instruction and writing.
- Family engagement support for all: Develop and publish a Family and Community Support Literacy Toolbox.
- Family Engagement Targeted support for Early Childhood Providers: Sit Together and Read Pilot and regional implementation.

OBJECTIVE 4: PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO LITERACY IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS AND HELP IDENTIFY SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES.

*Strategy 1: **Striving Readers Subgrants***: Utilize the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant award to promote collective networking through consortia to target support to districts, community schools and early childhood providers serving the greatest number/percentage of disadvantaged learners.

*Strategy 2: **Sustainability***: Ensure that grant applications are duly attentive to capacity building and program selection that can allow quality literacy practices to be sustained beyond the funding period.

State Activities

- Encourage consortia: LEAs with similar needs (based on their comprehensive needs assessments) or using similar approaches will be encouraged to form consortia to enhance their capacity to drive improvement efforts. This type of cooperative planning and implementation will allow LEAs to achieve economies of scale, and consequently reduce the costs per student served and foster the development of networked improvement communities and other similar infrastructure that support success and contribute to sustainability.
- Peer review process: Utilize an independent peer review process to score and award Striving Readers subgrants.
- Subgrant prioritization: Within the SRCL subgrant award process, prioritize applicants serving the greatest number/percentage of disadvantaged learners.
- Tools for sustainability: The Department and its partners will collaborate to create tools and technical assistance to address sustainability across the educational cascade (classroom, building, district, regions and the state).

- State Systemic Improvement Plan: Continue to implement the State Systemic Improvement Plan focused on increasing the implementation of evidence-based early literacy instruction and interventions for preschool through grade 3 with the 16 high-needs districts already identified.
- Continuous improvement: Utilize knowledge gained from the State Systemic Improvement Plan to inform continued state effort to support evidence-based language and literacy instruction and intervention for preschool through grade 3.



SECTION 6: MEASURING SUCCESS

MEASURING SUCCESS OF OHIO'S PLAN TO RAISE LITERACY ACHIEVEMENT

Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement aims to increase learner achievement through supporting educators, families and communities in planning for and implementing evidence-based language and literacy practices and making data-driven decisions to best meet the needs of all learners. This work is supported at the state, regional and local levels through a variety of activities including professional learning, coaching, mentoring and collaboration among stakeholders. Networking allows for real-time consultation, sharing of best practices and tackling problems of implementation.

The success of these activities ultimately is measured at the state level by learner outcomes on Ohio's Early Learning Assessment, Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, and Ohio's State Tests in English language arts. Ohio also is committed to analyzing the data sources that influence these learner outcomes along the way.

To measure the success of Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement, the following questions and data sources will be analyzed each year by the State Literacy Team:

1. Are districts' and community schools' Reading Achievement Plans aligned to the state's plan and to their overall improvement efforts?
 - a. Data sources: Analysis of submitted Reading Achievement Plans
2. Are districts, schools and early childhood providers engaging in data-driven decision-making and the Ohio Improvement Process?
 - a. Data sources: Monitoring data from school improvement application
3. Are districts, schools and early childhood providers implementing evidence-based language and literacy practices?
 - a. Data sources: Data collected through Ohio's Evidence-Based Clearinghouse and data collected through the Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Process
4. Are network activities productively supporting effective implementation, feedback and improvement?
 - a. Data sources: family, community, district and regional surveys. Monitoring network activities through bi-annual and annual reporting.
5. Are the literacy outcomes for learners from birth through grade 12 increasing at least at the rate set by Ohio's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated State Plan for the state's most disadvantaged learners?
 - a. Data sources: Ohio's Early Learning Assessment, Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, Ohio State Tests in English language arts grades 3-8 and high school
 - b. Ohio submitted goals to the U.S. Department of Education through its Every Student Succeeds Act Consolidated State Plan. The Department will measure the success of this comprehensive state literacy plan against these same learner performance goals (see Appendix K).

MEASURING SUCCESS OF THE STRIVING READERS COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY GRANT

Ohio also will be analyzing the performance of districts, schools, early childhood providers and consortia awarded a subgrant under the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant. Each awardee will establish goals based on local data to measure progress. The Department and its partners will work with the awardees to monitor progress toward these goals and engage in deeper levels of data analysis. A key element of support will be through encouraging consortia applications that foster collaboration among LEAs that are implementing the same or similar approaches.

At the state level, to gauge awardee's performance under this grant, Ohio will analyze:

1. The percentage of 4-year-old children (if applicable) who achieve significant gains in oral language skills;
2. The percentage of fifth-grade learners (if applicable) who meet or exceed proficient on state reading and English language arts assessments;
3. The percentage of eighth-grade learners (if applicable) who meet or exceed proficiency on state reading and English language arts assessments; and
4. The percentage of high school learners (if applicable) who meet or exceed proficiency on state reading and English language arts assessments.

Ohio will analyze the above data annually and share outcomes with stakeholders and the State Literacy Team to inform the implementation and continued development of Ohio's literacy efforts.



SECTION 7: OHIO'S PLAN FOR MONITORING PROGRESS

Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement is founded on the principle that *all* learners deserve and must have access to the highest-quality evidence-based language and literacy instruction. To achieve this, the Department is monitoring efforts at the state, regional, and local levels to ensure alignment and cohesion of support, resources and practices.

MONITORING STATE LITERACY ACTIVITIES

In 2016, the Department hired a literacy administrator to drive the alignment of the literacy work occurring throughout the Department and across the state. The literacy administrator is housed in the Center for Curriculum and Assessment, which oversees the Office of Curriculum and Assessment, Office of Early Learning and School Readiness and Office for Exceptional Children. The administrator also works with leadership throughout the agency to ensure alignment of literacy policies and practices. This work is critical to the Department as Ohio's literacy portfolio of policies is extensive and Ohio currently is implementing several literacy initiatives that must be aligned to achieve the greatest impact.

MONITORING REGIONAL LITERACY ACTIVITIES

The Department works closely with the regional network of early literacy specialists. To ensure aligned and cohesive work, the Department developed a Practice-to-Policy Feedback Loop (described in Section 8) to connect Department and regional staff. Through this feedback loop, literacy activities in the regional network are monitored to ensure alignment across the state while also being responsive to local regional needs.

MONITORING LOCAL LITERACY ACTIVITIES

READING ACHIEVEMENT PLANS

Included in Ohio's portfolio of literacy policies is the requirement for certain districts and schools to have Reading Achievement Plans. These plans serve as a districts' local school improvement plan for reading. Reading Achievement Plans are required for districts that meet the following criteria for two consecutive school years (2014-2015 and 2015-2016):

1. The district or community school received a grade of "D" or "F" on the K- 3 Literacy Improvement Measures of Ohio's accountability system; and
2. Fewer than 60 percent of the district's or community school's students scored proficient or higher on the state's grade 3 English language arts test

The state monitors each plan submitted for compliance. Plans are required to include the following:

- An analysis of relevant student performance data and additional factors believed to contribute to low reading achievement;
- Measurable student performance goals;

- A description of strategies to meet specific student needs and improve instruction, including:
 - Strategies that support students on reading improvement and monitoring plans;
 - Proposed evidence-based strategies;
 - A professional development plan;
- Alignment with other improvement efforts.

Each Reading Achievement Plan is read by regional literacy specialists. Districts are given feedback in the form of strengths and suggestions for improvement. The plans are posted on the Department's website.

Ohio uses the monitoring of the Reading Achievement Plans to inform state and regional efforts to support districts with the implementation of evidence-based language and literacy instruction and intervention. These supports include professional learning, individualized coaching by the regional structures (State Support Teams and Educational Service Centers) and state-level technical assistance.

STRIVING READERS COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY SUBGRANT AWARDEES

Through this grant, the Department is partnering with and awarding subgrants to LEAs and early childhood providers, or consortia of eligible providers, to implement evidence-based practices and interventions. Subgrantees are implementing Local Literacy Plans that are aligned to the state's comprehensive literacy plan and aligned to school improvement plans, which meet local needs.

LEAs and early childhood providers who receive a Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy subgrant are required to submit a local literacy plan using the Local Literacy Plan template. These plans must align to Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement. Striving Readers subgrantees will be monitored utilizing implementation rubrics based on three goals (for more detail see the [Ohio Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant Proposal](#)):

1. Fidelity of implementation and plan alignment;
2. Performance on plan goals and objectives; and
3. Fiscal accountability.

Collectively, the monitoring efforts of the Department at the state, regional and local levels allow the Department and its partners to make mid-course corrections to the state's plan when needed and celebrate successes, especially at the local level. Aligning these monitoring efforts further drives the Department's ability to implement and achieve the vision of Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement.

SECTION 8: IMPLEMENTING EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

The needs assessment conducted by Ohio's State Literacy Team coupled with the expectations of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) reveal a great need to support the identification and implementation of evidence-based practices. To meet the needs of the greatest number of districts, schools, early childhood providers and families the Department is investing in an **evidence-based clearinghouse**. To ensure that this endeavor is successful and impacts student achievement, the Department is developing professional learning to be delivered through a tiered approach, the **Ohio Coaching Framework** (see Appendix E), **networked improvement communities** and **enhancing practice-to-policy feedback loops**. These efforts will allow the Department to provide support in evidence-based language and literacy practices across the state. The following information outlines state activities to support the selection and implementation of evidence-based language and literacy instruction and intervention.

EVIDENCE-BASED CLEARINGHOUSE

Ohio is developing a multi-faceted, integrated approach to providing stakeholders with knowledge, data, tools and resources to address their improvement goals with strategies supported by evidence. This approach includes the development of Ohio's Evidence-Based Clearinghouse, an online resource that will provide districts with tailored information on practices and interventions that are supported by strong to moderate evidence, as defined by ESSA.

Though academic research plays an important role in establishing levels of evidence, Ohio's Evidence-Based Clearinghouse will be practitioner focused, as Ohio educators are the primary audience for the clearinghouse. Information, resources and connections to other systems incorporated in the clearinghouse will be designed with the practitioner in mind. The clearinghouse will serve as a critical resource for districts as they complete needs-assessments, identify areas for school improvement and identify relevant evidence-based practices and interventions. It is not meant to be a stagnant archive of information but rather a dynamic, living tool that provides districts and educators with resources they can use on a regular basis to improve learner outcomes.

Ohio's Evidence-Based Clearinghouse will include summary guides focused on broad topics and practitioner guides that offer examples of how interventions are carried out in districts, schools and classrooms and tools that connect practitioners to share lessons learned about specific practices and interventions. The clearinghouse also will include training and communication materials designed to reach a group of broader stakeholders beyond educators. These training materials will be publicly available to any community partner who might benefit from the clearinghouse.

The clearinghouse will be organized by high-level school improvement components (for example, human capital management, curriculum and instruction, college and career readiness) and designed to help districts make connections among relevant practices and the interventions. For purposes of literacy improvement, the clearinghouse also will be configured to allow quick access to literacy-specific research with annotations related to the strength of evidence and key components of practice and/or programs.

The Department's director of the Office of Research, Evaluation and Advanced Analytics will manage the overall review process, while an Evidence-Based Clearinghouse Review Team will determine the level of evidence associated with interventions, programs or practices submitted for review.

ENSURING EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPROVING UPON STRATEGIES

The Department is investing in both the identification and *implementation* of evidence-based language and literacy practices. To achieve this, the Department, in collaboration with regional supports, is developing professional learning to be disseminated to districts, schools, and early childhood providers through a tiered support approach. This tiered approach includes activities provided across the state, to targeted audiences and intensive supports for districts and schools with the most intensive needs. In addition, the Department is enhancing Ohio's Coaching Model to aid in the implementation of practices learned. Ohio aims to ensure effectiveness through the implementation of the following activities:

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

State-supported, job-embedded opportunities for professional learning related to Ohio's Comprehensive State Literacy Plan are being updated and developed. These opportunities reflect the state's birth to grade 12 literacy standards, model curriculum, e-learning modules, and guidance documents. The Department is developing a tiered support dissemination protocol for the state's professional learning. This tiered approach will provide support that is available for all stakeholders on the Department's website, targeted support through the Department's Learning Management System and Annual Literacy Academy, and targeted/intensive support provided by regional support systems.

Professional learning in literacy will focus on the language development continuum: emergent literacy, early literacy, conventional literacy and adolescent literacy (Section 4). This professional learning will include specific emphasis on foundational and extended literacy practices that are grounded in research-based reading instruction including the Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986), Scarborough's Rope, (Scarborough & Brady, 2002) and the Four-Part Processor for word recognition (Seidenburg & McClelland, 1989).

COACHING

A second support mechanism identified by the Department is the provision of coaching for district and regional staff. Research supports the use of coaching as an effective way to improve the instructional skills of teachers and learner outcomes (Cantrell & Hughes, 2008; Carlisle & Berebitsky, 2011; Shidler, 2009). Within Ohio's plan, coaching serves as both a tool for implementation and an intervention, to improve outcomes for all learners - especially those who are considered the most disadvantaged.

Ohio's Coaching Model was developed through Ohio's State Personnel Development Grant and Ohio's State Systemic Improvement Plan (Ohio's Early Literacy Plan and Pilot Project). Ohio's State Personnel Development Grant focused on the capacity of district-level teams, building-level team and teacher-based teams to conduct data analysis and

planning for literacy instruction and identify and implement appropriate intervention. The grant expanded the use of process coaching, an Ohio-developed version of reflective coaching, to support systemic district language and literacy structures with the Ohio Improvement Process. Ohio's State Systemic Improvement Plan focused on early literacy, provided professional learning targeted at foundational language and literacy development and included coaching focused on instructional implementation. Through these efforts, the Department learned that it is critical to provide support through both **systems-level** coaching and practice/content/**classroom-level** coaching (see Appendix E).

Ohio's Coaching Model identifies two focuses of coaching processes: 1) Instructional coaching which is implemented at the classroom level and 2) Systems coaching which is implemented at the administration and leadership team levels. The goal of *instructional coaching* is to develop knowledge, skills and abilities related to *content specific practices* to improve student outcomes. This type of coaching is provided to teachers, specialists, small teams of educators and paraprofessionals and includes face-to-face conversations and use of video. The goal of *systems coaching* is to develop knowledge, skills and abilities in the *infrastructures (systems)* to support high-quality use of language and literacy practices. This type of coaching often is provided to administrators, district leadership teams, building leadership teams and teacher-based teams.

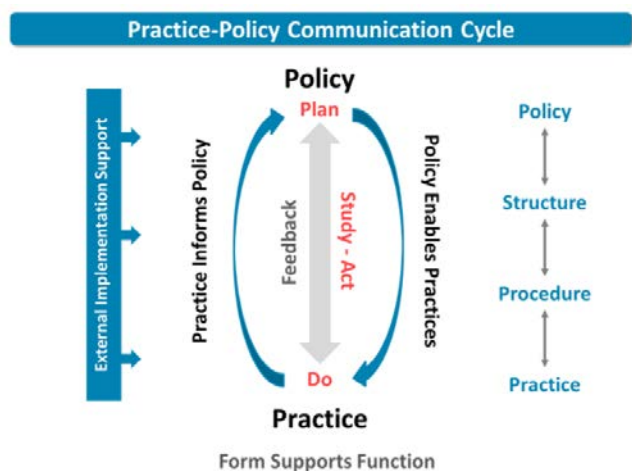
NETWORKED IMPROVEMENT COMMUNITIES

The Department recognizes the strength that comes from collaboration around implementation and shared problem-solving. As part of this process, the Department will support networked improvement communities either as part of consortia or separately established. These communities will allow participants to come together in shared learning to build the state capacity for implementing evidence-based language and literacy instruction and intervention for all learners. These networks will operate around the common conceptual frameworks described in Ohio's Plan for Raising Literacy Achievement. These include common measures of improvement at the individual, district and regional levels that serve to drive educational improvement efforts.

PRACTICE-TO-POLICY FEEDBACK LOOPS

The Department values robust practice-to-policy feedback loops. These feedback loops allow the Department to identify implementation barriers and successes to create a highly aligned system (implementation.fpg.unc.edu/). Figure 10 illustrates the bi-directional practice-to-policy feedback loop protocol used by the Department and supported by research. This type of feedback loop allows the Department to receive and respond to direct feedback from the field.

Figure 10. State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices Center (SISEP) and the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's FPG Child Development Institute



One example of the Department's use of these practice-to-policy feedback loops is the monthly face-to-face professional learning for regional support systems and targeted districts. These monthly sessions serve as a venue to increase knowledge, provide feedback on district and program progress, plan, share implementation ideas and receive guidance on program implementation. In addition, the monthly sessions facilitate networking between Regional Early Literacy Specialists, State Support Teams and Educational Service Center staff, and provide opportunities to expand learning and strengthen the specialists' knowledge of evidence-based language and literacy instructional practices. For example, to support their coaching skills, specialists participated in a school-based demonstration of "modeling effective instruction" facilitated by a local dyslexia expert and university professor. This professional learning addressed a need identified by Regional Early Literacy Specialists during monthly planning discussions (specifically, how to effectively coach and model phonological awareness practices in the classroom).

CONCLUSION

Ohio is committed to raising literacy achievement for children birth through grade 12. The Department uses the literacy vision (Section 4) to drive Ohio's Theory of Action (Section 1) to build capacity around the following:

- Shared leadership;
- Multi-tiered system of supports;
- Teacher capacity;
- Family partnerships; and
- Community collaboration.

Because literacy development is not unique to young learners and it is critical that all learners birth through grade 12 experience literacy development and success, the Department is committed to supporting increased engagement across the educational cascade (community, families, classroom, buildings, districts, regions and the state). This is achieved through implementing evidence-based language and literacy practices across the Language and Literacy Development Continuum, as illustrated in Section 4: Ohio's Literacy Vision.

Throughout Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement, the Department has addressed the plan, the program, and the people as three fundamental elements to increase learner achievement.

THE PLAN

Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement outlines the need to ensure that the work is deliberate, thoughtful and organized in a manner designed to deliver results – with a specific focus on the needs of disadvantaged students. The plan focuses on ensuring support for stakeholders across the educational cascade (community, families, classrooms, buildings, districts, regions and the state). In addition, the plan has been developed to support planning and implementation of evidence-based strategies across this cascade to enhance learning outcomes for children and students throughout the state from birth through grade 12.

THE PROGRAM

The Program speaks to the need to ensure that educators select targeted language and literacy strategies that are supported by evidence and meet the needs of the learners being served. These differentiated strategies support and promote development for all learners across the Language and Literacy Development Continuum, allowing all to reach their full potential. In addition, the Department's use of the Language and Literacy Development Continuum removes the assumption that literacy acquisition only occurs in elementary classrooms, but instead that it begins at birth and continues through adulthood.

THE PEOPLE

The People included in Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement include state level personnel, regional literacy experts, district, school and early childhood administrators,

instructional coaches, teachers, families and community leaders. The success of Ohio's plan is dependent on stakeholders from education and other fields committed to ensuring all children are provided the necessary literacy experiences, including instruction, from birth through grade 12. This commitment, along with effective implementation of evidence-based language and literacy strategies, will enable Ohio to reach maximum impact.

Focusing on the plan, the program and the people situates Ohio to take already existing policies and practices and significantly stimulate even more positive and productive action. Ohio's Plan for Raising Literacy Achievement lays the groundwork for many more learners, especially learners considered disadvantaged, to succeed academically and be ready for successful futures. This comprehensive plan illustrates Ohio's commitment to promoting networking and consortia building, focused on the alignment and sustainability of evidence-based language and literacy activities across broader school improvement efforts.



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