

Massachusetts Adolescent Literacy Intervention Selection Tool

ED# 2021-R1-I-0002



High-Leverage Problem

[Massachusetts 2022 National Assessment of Educational Progress \(NAEP\) data](#) show eighth-grade students' reading scores declining, with only 40% of eighth graders demonstrating reading proficiency (a score of 280). Further, reading score disparities exist between White students (average score 275) and historically minoritized students, particularly Black (254) and Hispanic students (252). For multilingual learners, the difference in outcomes is especially pronounced, with an average score of 215. Although the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is providing guidance on evidence-aligned instructional materials to establish a strong foundation in early literacy (Grades PreK–3) and core curricular programs, adolescent literacy interventions (for Grades 4–12) have yet to receive similar attention.

Evidence-aligned literacy interventions support teachers in accelerating student learning in reading, writing, and speaking skills. [Research also suggests the benefit of culturally and linguistically sustaining practices \(CLSP\) in addressing inequitable outcomes for historically marginalized students](#). However, training and curricula often fail to incorporate these approaches sufficiently to enable educators to recognize and utilize students' assets. Massachusetts schools need information and processes to identify high-quality instructional materials grounded in evidence that accelerate students' learning while leveraging their strengths through their cultural and linguistic identities.



R1CC Approach

Year 4 continued the Adolescent Literacy Intervention Selection Tool (A-LIST) development work from Year 3 and focused on reviewing the degree to which selected adolescent interventions support evidence-based recommendations. To inform that review, Region 1 Comprehensive Center (R1CC) and DESE collaboratively developed a Literacy Intervention Review Rubric based on the [IES Practice Guide: *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4–9*](#).

To conduct the review, R1CC and DESE developed an in-person literacy panel review process, which brought together six to eight local literacy experts over 3 days to calibrate on scoring with the rubric and to score two to three interventions. R1CC and DESE facilitated two rounds of panel scoring with a combined total of 13 panelists and eight interventions reviewed.

Once the panel ratings were finalized, R1CC and DESE shared with publishers their comprehensive intervention report (including information from [What Works Clearinghouse](#) and [Evidence for ESSA](#)). R1CC and DESE met with the publishers to review the reports for accuracy, discuss panel findings, and invite publishers to provide a publisher's statement for inclusion in the tool.

● — ⊙ — ⊙ → Key Milestones

- Developed a Literacy Intervention Review Rubric on the use of evidence-based practices based on the IES Practice Guide: Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4–9.
- Collaborated with intervention publishers to (a) collect artifacts for panelists to review and (b) gather feedback on the accuracy and completeness of their Program Reports.
- Trained and facilitated two panels (13 total members) of DESE-selected literacy expert reviewers using the Literacy Intervention Review Rubric, collected artifacts, and scoring guidance.
- Scored eight adolescent intervention programs.
- Developed a Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices Rubric for inclusion in future panel reviews.
- Developed a webpage for the Adolescent Literacy Intervention Selection Tool (A-LIST) on the R1CC website.

? → Outputs

- Adolescent literacy intervention data collection tool with uploaded program artifacts.
- Two rounds of three scoring panel sessions, each facilitated by R1CC staff with DESE support.
- A-LIST Process Guide.
- Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices in Adolescent Literacy Intervention Programs Rubric.

Outcomes

1. **DESE staff have increased human capacity to collect materials and facilitate scoring panels for evaluation of literacy interventions' alignment to evidence-based practice recommendations.**
2. **DESE staff and review panelists have increased human capacity on how to score adolescent reading interventions using the developed rubric.**

“The process is very effective. Really appreciate the discussions and opportunities to reflect and change.”

“This has been an incredible collaborative experience.”