North Dakota
Comprehensive Literacy Plan
Taking Action to Ensure Literacy Achievement for All

NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Revised July 2021

Foreword

Literacy skills are necessary for students in their lives after high school, whether it includes post-secondary education, immediate entry into the workforce, military service, or other types of career development. Literacy skills are also relevant to successful relationships and outcomes in every aspect of life. The priority is to develop strong literacy skills in all North Dakota students.

Literacy is not just proficiency in writing and reading. As North Dakota educators developed this statewide literacy plan, a comprehensive and structured approach to teaching literacy to our youngest citizens was used. The intent is to refresh the plan each year, and the commitment is to provide every student the instruction and resources they need to read, write, speak, and listen proficiently.

This plan is a framework for strengthening all students' ability to read, write, speak, and listen. It includes these essential elements: leading for impact, supporting professional learning, engaging all stakeholders, planning standards-aligned curriculum, assessments to measure progress, and providing all students the resources they need to succeed. The plan incorporates shared beliefs and practices that have been tested and proven effective. It shows the relevancy and importance of reading, writing, and listening skills for work and relationships.

This year's revisions were influenced by conversations with local school districts, information from district Continuous Improvement System survey data, an analysis of the statewide needs of K-12 educators – particularly those working in early childhood education – and the resources needed to strengthen literacy programs within programs, schools, and school districts.

I want to extend my profound thanks to the literacy team that oversaw this update. The team consisted of members from diverse backgrounds, including teachers and experts who work in all levels of education from early childhood to higher education and advisers from the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction.

I am especially grateful to our North Dakota educators, families, and taxpayers who take an interest in this plan, and who support and celebrate literacy instruction and learning.

Thank you.

Kirsten Baesler

Kirsten Baesler
Superintendent of Public Instruction

North Dakota State Literacy Team

The 2021-2024 North Dakota State Literacy Team is comprised of literacy experts from diverse backgrounds including educators representing all levels from early childhood through university and advisers from state and local agencies.

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Introduction

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>
> **It is the goal of North Dakota to support all learners in attaining a level of literacy allowing them to:**
>
> - **Accurately communicate ideas to others, and**
> - **Independently access knowledge for self and world improvement.**

Vision

Taking action to ensure literacy achievement for all.

Grounding Belief

Literacy is a complex relationship of sounds and symbols used to communicate meaning. It includes reading, writing, speaking, listening and analytical thinking. Literacy development begins at birth and continues throughout life. Ensuring that all learners have equitable access to literacy attainment is a collective community responsibility.

Purpose

The purpose of the state comprehensive literacy plan is to provide a working tool for practitioners to understand, support and implement systems to improve literacy for all.

History

The North Dakota Comprehensive Literacy Plan was first drafted as a part of a federal grant application in 2010 to address literacy support throughout the state. North Dakota has since received two federal grants to improve literacy instruction. In 2017 the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) grant brought funding to fifteen districts for three years. In 2019, the second award called the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grant secured five years of literacy support to twenty-two districts. Together these grants total more than seventy million dollars. The grants require that the state maintain and annually update a state literacy plan which guides local districts in their work.

The plan is maintained by the State Literacy Team which is comprised of fifteen members selected through competitive application and includes practitioners representing diverse literacy education roles. The State Literacy Team was created with the overall vision of the State, local education agencies (LEAs), and early childhood programs to integrate and align literacy resources and policies to support disadvantaged children, Birth through Grade 12, to be choice ready.

Revisions are informed by local needs, data from continuous improvement system surveys and research of current practices. This process helps the team successfully identify, understand, and address statewide literacy challenges at all levels.

What is the North Dakota PK-12 Strategic Vision?

In 2019 a group of invested leaders came together to create a five-year vision for education work in North Dakota. That group created the PK-12 Education Strategic Vision Framework with outcomes for ND students. Literacy is directly addressed in long-term outcome #2, "Increase students who demonstrate reading proficiency in 3rd grade." Literacy, as defined above, is woven throughout the plan as both an outcome and a means to achieving the vision.
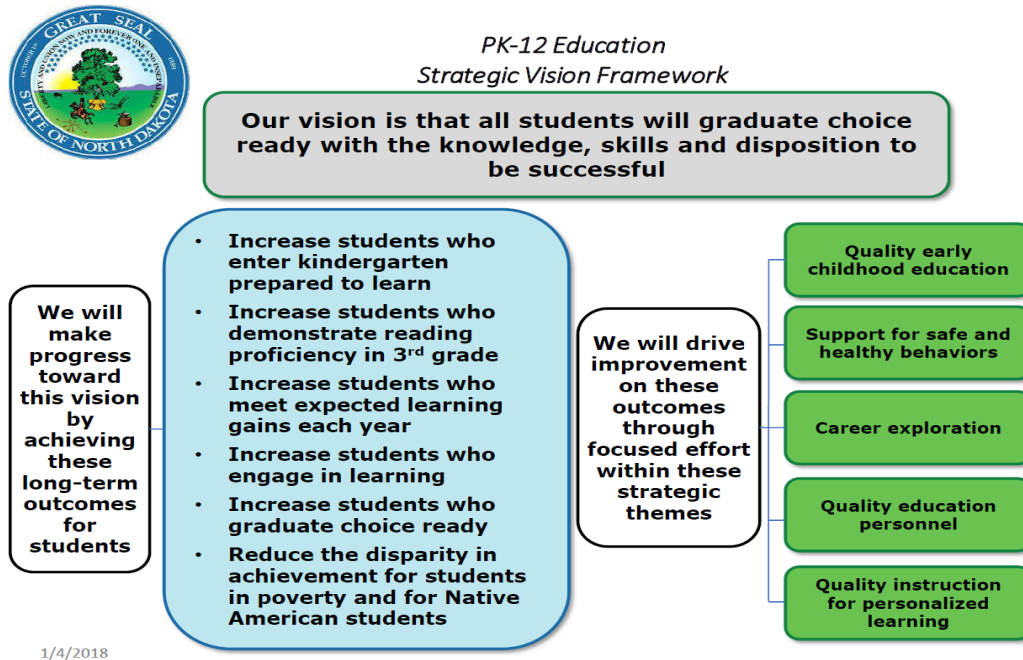
How is North Dakota doing toward Reaching the Education Vision? A look at the statistics.

The following information is reported on the ND Insights Dashboard and updated annually. Due to COVID interruptions in testing, information from the prior year (2018-19) is what was available at the time of this writing. The 2020-21 assessment data will be updated late summer to early fall of 2021.

All Students: In the 2018-2019 school year, 48% of North Dakota's third graders were proficient or higher on the North Dakota State Assessment (NDSA) in English Language Arts. Proficient means that a student is demonstrating skills at or above those expected at that grade level. North Dakota has nearly 115,000 students. We cannot be satisfied with our approach to teaching literacy when we know that 57,000 learners are not on track to reach a level of literacy that enables learners to communicate ideas and access information for their own enjoyment and their own and society's benefit.

Disadvantaged Students: For students with disadvantages, such as being on Individualized Education Plans, from low-income homes, from minority groups or being an immigrant and learning to speak English, the numbers become even more alarming. For example, Native American students who took the 2019 NDSA demonstrated only 26% proficiency in English language arts indicating that three of four Native American students are below grade level proficiency.
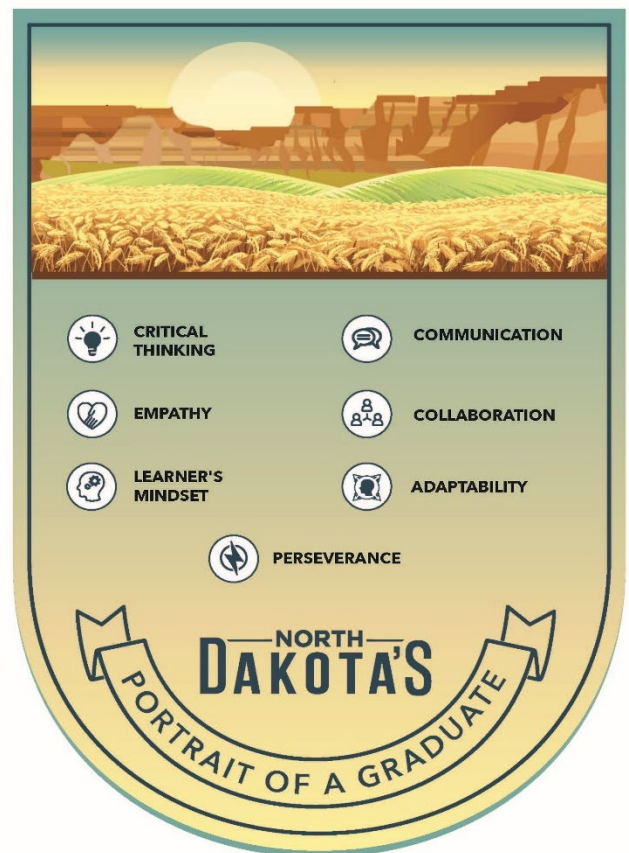
Early Learning Access: Another Strategic Vision outcome which impacts literacy achievement is access to preschool experiences. According to ND Compass Trend in 2018 North Dakota had the third lowest percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in preschool among the 50 states at 37.2%.

"You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step." **Martin Luther King**

Using this Document: This document is designed as a tool for practitioners to strengthen their understanding of literacy across a continuum of learning. It emphasizes building systems to support student achievement. Following the overviews of each element within the system are two worksheets that might help drive the decision making for your team. The first worksheet is a reflective tool to consider current reality. The second is a set of questions that might be used to drive an action plan. As you work through these reflections, you might build your local priorities and action steps. Some local and research-based resources are included to help get you get started but should not be considered the only resources available to you.

North Dakota Portrait of a Graduate

In support of the Pathways to Graduation bill, Governor Burgum unveiled the "Portrait of a Graduate," a framework whose development began with the Innovative Education Task Force and supports personalized learning. A "Portrait of a Graduate" serves as a visioning device for a school system. It establishes the purpose for schools because graduates represent the culmination of the K–12 learning experience. Most families hope their children wear their cap and gown and walk across the graduation stage. A student's successful graduation is one of the first rites of passage that can have significant implications on the scope of life choices to follow. While graduation itself is not enough to help young people maximize life's opportunities, the attributes students develop by the time they graduate often inform the opportunities available to them after high school. (Summary Report for Portrait of a Graduate) Competencies within this portrait are foundational to literacy success across the lifespan.

Resources
ND Insights:
https://insights.nd.gov
North Dakota Compass Trend:
https://www.ndcompass.org
P-K12 Strategic Vision:
https://www.nd.gov/dpi/sites/www/files/documents/Superintendent/NDEducationVisionAlignedInitiatives2020.pdf
Summary Report for Portrait of a Graduate:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IKlxFiqsGL6UNYHoAg5eLjhxCJMPyQ2f/view

CRITICAL THINKING
A North Dakotan…
- Consistently improves the quality of one's own thinking by being socially aware, questioning bias and assumptions.
- Applies disciplined thinking that is clear, rational, open-minded.
- Understands the global perspectives while also proposing solutions that are mindful to the impact they may have on the local communities.

EMPATHY
A North Dakotan…
- Seeks, understands, and productively responds to the points of view, feelings, and experiences of others.
- Embraces, global, local, and personal responsibility for making the world a better place.
- Understands that addressing societal challenges often requires compromise while promoting understanding of complex issues and varying perspectives.

PERSEVERANCE
A North Dakotan…
- Understands the relationship between effort, attitude, and achievement.
- Embraces the idea that failure is a part of success and quickly pivots to keep moving forward.
- Navigates adversity by identifying its source and duration, utilizing strengths and available supports.
- Demonstrates grit, curiosity and positive attitudes while on a life-long quest for knowledge and skills.

COMMUNICATION
A North Dakotan…
- Listens to understand before communicating to be understood.
- Articulates thoughts and ideas effectively in a variety of forms and contexts.
- Uses communications for a range of purposes and audiences (e.g. to self-advocate, build positive relationships, resolve conflict, achieve shared goals,) to give and receive feedback.

COLLABORATION
A North Dakotan…
- Assumes shared responsibility to utilize strengths to build collective commitment and action.
- Contributes to group effectiveness in pursuit of a shared vision.
- Possesses a team mentality that elicits diverse perspectives and contributions.

ADAPTABILITY
A North Dakotan…
- Responds productively and positively to feedback, praise, setbacks, and criticism.
- Understands, negotiates, and balances diverse views and beliefs to reach workable solutions.
- Analyzes conditions to create a plan utilizing self-awareness and self-management to overcome them.

LEARNER'S MINDSET
A North Dakotan…
- Embraces a commitment to lifelong learning while approaching their pursuits with passion.
- Possesses the desire to learn, unlearn, and relearn.

NORTH DAKOTA'S PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

Six Essential Elements

Systems	
Leading for Impact	Leaders and teams deeply engage in specific work to effectively ensure that all learners receive a high-quality literacy education.
Supporting Professional Learning	Leaders align resources and processes to support all staff in improvement of literacy knowledge and instructional skill application.
Stakeholders	
Engaging all Stakeholders	School and early childhood professionals lead collaboration strategies to engage and empower students, families, and community partners to impact student achievement.
Classrooms	
Planning Standards-aligned Curriculum	School and early childhood professionals ensure the selection and use of methods, resources, and assessments to achieve the desired student outcomes defined in the North Dakota Content and Early Learning Standards.
Instructing with Precision	School and early childhood professionals use evidence-based programs and practices in a consistent method responding to individual learner progress with corrective supports.
Assessing to Inform	School and early childhood professionals use data and feedback to monitor and adjust all decisions impacting literacy.

North Dakota Literacy Continuum

Key Literacy Elements	Beginning Literacy: Unlocking the Code		Content Literacy: Literacy Across Subjects		Disciplinary Literacy: Literacy Within Subjects
	Birth-Age 3	*Ages 3-5*	*Grades K-3*	*Grades 4-6*	*Grades 7-12*
	Critical Thinking	*Empathy*	*Learner's Mindset*	*Communication*	*Collaboration* *Adaptability* *Perseverance*
Reading	Understand Value of Reading				
		Explicit Instruction of Letter Names (Alphabetic Principle)			
	Playing with Sounds Inside Words				
	Concepts of Print				
		Phonemic Awareness			
		Sight Recognition			
			Phonics		
		Phonological Awareness			
			Decoding		
			Fluency		
			Comprehension		
				Summarizing	
					Interpreting
				Predicting	
					Analyzing
Writing	Development of Motor Skills Through Play	Explicit Instruction of Letter Shapes and Names			
	Concepts of Print				
			Vocabulary/Word Study		
			Spelling		
			Writing Processes		Writing Processes Within Disciplines
			Writing Traits		
			Grammar		Grammar and Conventions Within Disciplines
			Mechanics and Conventions		
		Introduction to Genres	Genres		
			Organization and Structure		Organization and Structure Within Authentic Context
Speaking and Listening	Discover Voice	Extended Conversations	Discussion of Ideas		Discourse
	Print/Sound Correspondence			Providing Textual Evidence	
	Beginning One-Way Conversations		Two-Way Communication		
		Retelling		Supporting Arguments	
					Discipline Specific Language/Presentation
	Play	Play and Turn Taking			
				Asking Questions	
Continuous Supports	Plan Data Informed Interventions				
	Ensure Research Based Instructional Strategies and Standards Alignment				
	Develop Collaborative Partnerships with Families				
	Create Avenues for Easy Access to Abundant and Diverse Reading, Writing, and Speaking Materials and Opportunities				
	Provide Safe, Secure, Engaging Environments				

Version 7/20/2021

Resources:
Lent R.C. & Voigt M.M. (2019) *This is Disciplinary Literacy in Action.* Corwin Press
Simms, J.A. & Marzano R. (2019) *The New Art and Science of Teaching Reading.* ASCD/Solution Tree
Burkins, J. and Yates, K. (2021) *Shifting the Balance.* Stenhouse Publishers
Scarborough, H. (2001) *Handbook of Early Literacy.* Guilford Press
North Dakota State Portrait of a Graduate (2021) Governor's Office

Vision

Leaders build a culture *and* a system that can achieve the goal of life-long literacy skills for all learners.

Action

Leaders are responsible for creating and managing teams that share the goal and responsibility for every learner achieving proficient literacy skills. They train and expect all team members to understand both individual and team responsibilities toward reaching that common goal.

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Leaders

Leaders can emerge from various roles. Some are assigned by employment or appointment such as superintendents, principals and instructional coaches, and school board members. But others rise naturally from roles such as teachers, media specialists, family, and community members and even students.

Great leaders invite collaborative and innovative strategies to meet the needs of all learners, students, and adults.

Local Literacy Teams

A local literacy team is a group of leaders who come together to study and guide the work of the system that is focused on literacy instruction and achievement. This team should have representation from a wide variety of roles mentioned above and should focus on the complete literacy journey from birth through grade 12.

Great literacy teams create a plan and processes to follow the plan to reach goals.

Literacy team leaders clearly and systematically assure effective literacy achievement by:

- Modeling effective practices enthusiastically and efficiently which supports their vision and culture and guiding collaborative teamwork and individual accountability.
- Establishing partnerships by building capacity within staff and stakeholders to embrace leadership roles and literacy work.
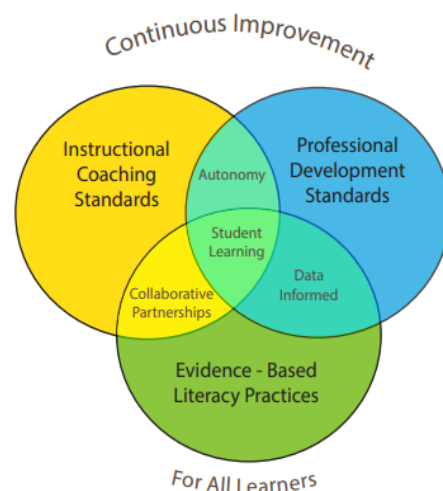
- Enacting policies and structures that ensure equitable access to high-quality instruction for all learners.
- Setting high expectations in practices and accountability measures.
- Preparing, selecting, and retaining high-quality educational leaders that stay informed and demonstrate current evidence-based best practices to support and guide improvement of instruction.
- Ensuring instructional coaches utilize and implement coaching program standards.
- Ensuring the transparency of data and goals to all stakeholders.
- Using and sharing data and feedback effectively to monitor growth and inform change.
- Allocating resources to engage families and communities to support and sustain literacy achievement.

Support Teams

The size of a system dictates which support teams are necessary to carry out the literacy work. Systems might consider additional building, age/grade level, content, and community teams. Examples of specific work teams based on need might include vertical alignment teams, literacy coaching models, Professional Learning Communities (PLC), Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) team, or early childhood task force.

Team Roles

Teams clearly and systematically guide effective literacy achievement by:

- Building and maintaining a culture of literacy in the school and community.
- Establishing communication paths that include all stakeholder voices.
- Defining member roles and responsibilities.
- Creating, monitoring, and maintaining a system of supports to identify and meet unique learner needs (such as a Multi-Tiered System of Support).
- Establishing a local literacy approach (plan) that ensures developmentally appropriate, evidence-based, best practices are identified, implemented system-wide, evaluated for effectiveness in an ongoing method, and ensured to be occurring equitably across the system and community.
- Ensuring a guaranteed and viable literacy curriculum for all ages including content area approaches to literacy.
- Focusing on literacy instruction informed by evidence-based programs and practices.

Leading for Impact Reflection Activity

Read the statements below from the perspective of each stakeholder group listed. Determine whether members of the stakeholder groups would consider the statement to be true. If yes, place a check in the box; if no, explore why and how that situation can be improved.	Students	K-12 Educators/ECE Partners	Administrators	School Board Members	Families and Community Members
I am an active part of literacy decision making for my district and my opinion is valued.					
Any suggestions I make for literacy change are heard and acknowledged.					
I am thoughtfully informed any time there is an important literacy decision happening for the district/education community.					
There are many opportunities for me to get involved in literacy work within the district.					
I am confident that my district has my best interests in mind whenever literacy decisions are being made.					
I am a member of a community team which is focused on working toward literacy improvement for all students.					
I see literacy valued in the district/community by the resources (time, materials, staff) dedicated to literacy initiatives.					
I know the measurements for high-quality literacy staff in the district/community and how that standard is met and maintained.					
I understand my role and responsibilities for literacy achievement in my district/community.					
I know how to access and use the Local Literacy Plan.					
I have a clear understanding of literacy achievement in the district/community and the work necessary to eliminate barriers to literacy achievement.					
I understand the importance and life-long impact of literacy achievement levels.					

Local Workspace

Consider the impact leadership is having on literacy in your community.

What positive actions should continue and be celebrated?	
What unproductive practices should be discontinued?	
What immediate steps can be taken?	
What topics should be researched?	
What challenges/roadblocks should be addressed?	
What is a goal one year from now?	

Supporting Professional Learning

Vision

Leadership supports group and individual learning to achieve a system that builds capacity, supports personalized learning, and promotes growth mindset through evidence-based instructional practice.

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Action

Quality professional development aligns resources and processes to support all staff in continuous growth of understanding of literacy knowledge and evidence-based instructional practices. This is accomplished by promoting opportunities for all stakeholders to engage deeply in learning, infusing a culture of literacy, and cultivating lasting change across systems for student-centered literacy achievement.

Quality professional development includes:
- **Data Informed**: Uses learner evidence to determine needs.
- **Emotional and Culturally Responsive Practices**: Creates emotionally and intellectually safe learning environments.
- **Supported Implementation**: New learning is implemented with fidelity through instructional and peer coaching.
- **Collaborative & Reflective**: Offers ongoing opportunities for implementation, collaboration, and reflective practices to improve literacy instruction (example: Professional Learning Communities).
- **Sustained**: Opportunities are provided for new learnings to be practiced and refined. Follow-up training to expand knowledge of previous learnings are reflexive to teacher needs and are data informed.
- **Job Embedded**: New learning addressed in a timely and relevant manner.
- **Focused:** Clearly defined learning outcomes and expectations are provided.
  (ESSA Professional Development Definition S. 1177, Section 8002, page 295, paragraph 42)

Professional Learning should include all learners who help build capacity in others to:
- Develop as an instructional leader to advance instructional coaching, the teaching profession, and equitable outcomes for every student.
- Deepen and maintain own knowledge of rigorous content standards, social emotional learning, learner variability, and culturally responsive pedagogy.
- Create and maintain collaborative, respectful, instructionally focused coaching partnerships with individual and groups of teachers to foster teacher ownership of continuous improvement of practice and to advance the learning of every student.
- Engage school leaders and instructional leadership team in partnership to advance teacher effectiveness and the learning of every student.
- Engage staff in situationally focused inquiry cycles to accelerate teaching practice and equitable outcomes for every student.
- Build staff capacity to advance equitable and inclusive learning by providing an optimal learning environment that meets the diverse academic, social, and emotional needs of every student.

Resources:

REA Contact and Professional Learning Information:
- Central Regional Education Association:
  https://www.creand.org/
- Great Northwest Education Cooperative:
  https://www.gnewc.org
- North Central Education Cooperative:
  https://ncec.k12.nd.us
- North Dakota Professional Development Calendar
  https://northdakotapd.com
- Northeast Education Services Cooperative:
  https://www.nesc.k12.nd.us
- Red River Valley Education Cooperative:
  https://www.rrvecnd.org
- Roughrider Education Services Program:
  https://www.resp-k12-education.org
- South East Education Cooperative:
  https://www.ndseec.com/

All Age Bands
- NDMTSS Website:
  https://www.ndmtss.org/
- NDMTSS Playbook:
  https://www.ndrea.org/index.php?id=40
- NDREA Calendar of Events:
  https://members.ndrea.org/ndrea-events
- ND State Library Online Resources:
  http://www.library.nd.gov/onlineresources.html

- ND Literacy Association:
  https://ndlit.wildapricot.org/
- ND Council of Teachers of English:
  http://www.ndcte.org/
- ND Reading Corps:
  http://www.ndreadingcorps.org/
- Self-Study Guide to Evidence Based Coaching:
  https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iZahXWy0_O3nM4O3hwBeNXQy-as_eyKW/view

Early Literacy:
- Planning Emergent Literacy PLC:
  https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IalHgF1V33MXA_E3xQOf0mdHwdOaaKi2/view

Considerations for Planning and Implementing Literacy Coaching

Implementing literacy coaching is a complex process that includes several areas for consideration. District and school level administrators, coaches, and teachers may be unaware of what they can do to help ensure coaches are as effective as possible in their role. Presented below are four specific areas shown from the research to be important when planning for and implementing literacy coaching.

Principal-coach partnership agreements

These agreements specify the duties and activities of the coach and how the principal will provide support.[5] They may eliminate non-instructional duties for the coach and establish criteria used for determining who the coach will work with during the school year.[3]

Evidence-based practices of the coach

Evidence-based practices include lesson planning with teachers, modeling, co-teaching, engaging in reflective conversations,[4, 8] and engaging in data chats.[3]

Hiring and training practices

Job descriptions and protocols should facilitate the selection of the strongest candidates, establish initial training expectations, and provide for ongoing professional learning.[3]

Communication

Coaches should communicate data informed responses that are timely,[2, 7] and establish positive relationships with teachers and principals through their interactions.[1, 6, 9] It is important for teachers and principals to keep open lines of communication with coaches to help ensure coaches are as effective as possible in their role.

1 Ippolito, J. (2010). Three ways that literacy coaches balance responsive and directive relationships with teachers. Elementary School Journal, 111(1), 164–190.

2 Kretlow, A. G., & Bartholomew, C. C. (2010). Using coaching to improve the fidelity of evidence-based practices: A review of studies. Teacher Education and Special Education: The Journal of the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children, 33(4), 279–299.

3 Marsh, J. A., McCombs, J. S., Lockwood, J. R., Gershwin, D., & Martorell, F. (2008). Supporting literacy across the sunshine state: A study of Florida middle school reading coaches (Vol. 762). Rand Corporation.

4 Matsumura, L. C., Garnier, H. E., & Spybrook, J. (2013). Literacy coaching to improve student reading achievement: A multi-level mediation model. Learning and Instruction, 25, 35-48.

5 Matsumura, L. C., Sartoris, M., Bickel, D. D., & Garnier, H. E. (2009). Leadership for literacy coaching: The principal's role in launching a new coaching program. Educational Administration Quarterly, 45(5), 655–693.

6 Neuman, S. B., & Wright, T. S. (2010). Promoting language and literacy development for early childhood educators: A mixed-methods study of coursework and coaching. Elementary School Journal, 111(1), 63–86.

7 Snyder, P. A., Hemmeter, M. L., & Fox, L. (2015). Supporting Implementation of evidence-based practices through practice-based coaching. Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 35(3), 133–143.

8 Walpole, S., McKenna, M. C., & Morrill, J. K. (2011). Building and rebuilding a statewide support system for literacy coaches. Reading & Writing Quarterly 27(3), 261–280.

9 Walpole, S., & Blamey, K. L. (2008). Elementary literacy coaches: The reality of dual roles. Reading Teacher, 62(3), 222–231.

Supporting Professional Learning Reflection Activity

Read the statements below from the perspective of each stakeholder group listed. Determine whether members of the stakeholder groups would consider the statement to be true. If yes, place a check in the box; if no, explore why and how that situation can be improved.	Students	K-12 Educators/ECE Partners	Administrators	School Board Members	Families and Community Members
I am aware that the district schedules time for all staff to engage in professional learning.					
My district takes into consideration my opinions when deciding on professional development for its staff.					
I am informed of any new learning and approaches that will be used in my district/community before the changes happen.					
I know who I can contact if I feel like there is something the district or community could be learning more about.					
I have been offered opportunities to engage in literacy-related learning.					
I understand the process for selecting professional development opportunities and have access to the data used to determine the learning needs.					
I am asked to reflect on the quality of implementation of the professional learning provided in the district/community.					
I understand how instructional coaching specific to literacy can improve student outcomes.					
I am part of at least one community/group that regularly engages in literacy improvement work and reflection.					

Local Workspace

Consider the impact professional learning is having on literacy in your community.

What positive actions should continue and be celebrated?	
What unproductive practices should be discontinued?	
What immediate steps can be taken?	
What topics should be researched?	
What challenges/roadblocks should be addressed?	
What is a goal one year from now?	

Engaging All Stakeholders

Vision

Practitioners build capacity toward learner success and release responsibility to students, their families, and community members.

Action

Stakeholders lead collaboration strategies to engage and empower students, families, and partners to build a community of learners to impact student achievement.

Mission

It is the goal of North Dakota to support all learners in attaining a level of literacy allowing them to:

- **Accurately communicate ideas to others, and**
- **Independently access knowledge for self and world improvement.**

- All voices are included to ensure equity.
- Communication through varied avenues is used to increase access for all stakeholders.
- Partner with the community and elected officials to work toward collective goals.
- Build relationships to maximize family strengths to support literacy, learning, and well-being.
- Respond with a growth-mindset to student and community strengths and next steps, once identified.
- Develop and nurture a strong literacy culture in the school and community.
- Connect families to opportunities and resources to foster a robust support network for language and literacy development.
- Infuse families and community culture and language into collective goals, partnerships, and actions.
- Provide research-based practices for families and communities to support literacy development.
- Ensure consistent approaches and smooth transitions from one literacy setting to another.
- Establish and maintain a review process for family engagement philosophy and measurements for evidence of progress.
- Access tools to determine levels of bias, fairness and cultural responsiveness in programs and practices.
- Advocate for policy, practices, and procedures that have a high impact on literacy opportunities and resources for all learners.
- Allocate resources to engage families and communities.

Resources:

All

- ND Choice Ready:
  https://www.nd.gov/dpi/districtsschools/essa/elements/choice-ready
- Teachings of our Elders
  https://teachingsofourelders.org/ndnaeu-aligned-lessons/
- ACCESS for ELLs:
  https://www.nd.gov/dpi/districtsschools/assessment/access-ells
- CASEL:
  https://casel.org/
- DPI Family Engagement Resources & Toolkits:
  https://www.nd.gov/dpi/parentscommunity/parents/family-engagement
- ND MTSS Family Engagement:
  https://ndmtss.org/parenting-resources/

Birth-5

- Learning to Read and Write Birth to Five:
  https://www.childcareaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Learning_to_Read_and_Write_Begins_at_Birth-.pdf
- Making the Transition from Childcare to Kindergarten:
  https://www.childcareaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Making_the_Transition_from_Child_Care_to_Kindergarten.pdf
- CSEFEL Family Tools:
  http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/family.html

Engaging All Stakeholders Reflection Activity

Read the statements below from the perspective of each stakeholder group listed. Determine whether members of the stakeholder groups would consider the statement to be true. If yes, place a check in the box; if no, explore why and how that situation can be improved.	Students	K-12 Educators/ECE Partners	Administrators	School Board Members	Families and Community Members
I know how to access information about activities in any classroom in which I have a stake.					
I know when I call or email the district someone will willingly and enthusiastically help me answer my question.					
I feel welcomed and am met with positive reactions any time I enter a building in our district.					
The district informs me in a timely manner of any changes or updates happening and gives me the opportunity to ask questions about that change.					
When I have an idea or question, I know how and where to speak up to have my voice heard.					
Any information that is shared with me is done so in a format and at a level that I can understand.					
I am interested in what is happening at my school or childcare facility.					
The things the school or childcare facility has me do have a direct impact on life-long literacy skills.					
I feel that others in the district and community care about the literacy success of all learners and their families.					
I know what the literacy resources in my community are and how to access them.					

Local Workspace

Consider the impact stakeholder engagement is having on literacy in your community.

What positive actions should continue and be celebrated?	
What unproductive practices should be discontinued?	
What immediate steps can be taken?	
What topics should be researched?	
What challenges/roadblocks should be addressed?	
What is a goal one year from now?	

Planning Standards-Aligned Curriculum

Vision

Learners receive instruction that delivers state-approved standards to mastery within a guaranteed and viable framework.

Mission

It is the goal of North Dakota to support all learners in attaining a level of literacy allowing them to:

- **Accurately communicate ideas to others, and**
- **Independently access knowledge for self and world improvement.**

Action

Practitioners ensure the selection and alignment of methods, resources, and assessments to achieve the desired student outcomes defined in the North Dakota Content and Early Learning Standards. Mastery of the standards and learning outcomes ensures students obtain all literacy skills along a continuum presented in a developmentally appropriate sequence to access lifelong informational learning and leisure literacy enjoyment.

State of North Dakota:

- Leads the design of early learning and instructional standards in all content areas to move children along a continuum of developmentally appropriate, rigorous skill progressions from birth through grade 12.
- Identifies committees comprised of selected content experts at all levels to develop the state content standards.
- Ensures the Early Learning Content Standards outline appropriate language, communication, and literacy skills.
- Ensures the English Language Arts (ELA) standards outline appropriate reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.
- Identifies literacy standards within content areas - social studies, science, and career and technical courses.
- Supports the development of ELA Prioritized Standards and Proficiency Scales to support implementation of the most critically important literacy skills identified by state content experts.
- Alignment with and inclusive of SEL competencies and culturally responsive instructional practices.

Local Districts:

Achieve the desired student outcomes defined in the content standards through a continuous improvement process which includes:

- Selecting developmentally appropriate, evidence-based:
    - o Instructional methods
    - o Resources
    - o Assessments
- Establishing a guaranteed and viable curriculum and related supports.
- Ensuring staff are knowledgeable and are implementing effective and evidence based instructional strategies with fidelity to support students in reaching proficiency of standards.
- Regularly reviewing and refining the effectiveness of curriculum and instructional choices in relation to student achievement of standard identified skills.
- Assisting stakeholders in understanding the purpose and approaches to standards-aligned instruction and assessment.
- Integrating disciplinary literacy within content areas.

Resources:
- Prioritized Standards, Proficiency Scales, Assessments:
  http://www.ndrea.org/index.php?id=112
- ND Child Care Aware:
  https://ndchildcare.org/
- ZERO TO THREE:
  https://www.zerotothree.org/
- CSEFEL:
  http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/
- North Dakota Early Learning Standards Birth to Kindergarten:
  https://www.nd.gov/dpi/sites/www/files/documents/Academic%20Support/EL2018.pdf
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC):
  https://www.naeyc.org/
- Head Start - Early learning Curriculum Guidance:
  https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/curriculum
- Head Start - Early Learning Outcomes Framework:
  https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/interactive-head-start-early-learning-outcomes-framework-ages-birth-five
- North Dakota English Language Arts and Literacy 1-12 Standards:
  https://www.nd.gov/dpi/districtsschools/k-12-education-content-standards
- EL Norms:
  https://www.ndseec.com/programs-and-services/professional-development/english-learners.html
- WIDA Standards:
  https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/standards
- ELA in CTE, Science, and Social Studies, ELA Appendix D:
  https://www.nd.gov/dpi/districtsschools/k-12-education-content-standards
- What Works in Education Clearinghouse:
  https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/

Planning Standards-Aligned Curriculum Reflection Activity					
Read the statements below from the perspective of each stakeholder group listed. Determine whether members of the stakeholder groups would consider the statement to be true. If yes, place a check in the box; if no, explore why and how that situation can be improved.	Students	K-12 Educators/ ECE Partners	Administrators	School Board Members	Families and Community Members
The North Dakota English Language Arts state standards have been introduced to me and I know where to find them for reference.					
The North Dakota Early Learning Standards have been introduced to me and I know where to find them for reference.					
The ELA standards that are included in other content areas have been introduced to me. I know where to find them and understand the role of literacy in content classes.					
I know the scope and sequence of each classroom in which I have a stake and what to expect at all levels of education.					
I know what the outcome of each standard is and how that is being evaluated.					
I know how the district/community monitors student progress and mastery of the content standards and how to access that data.					
I know who to speak with if I am confused by a standard or the language of the standard.					
The district has identified priority standards and I know what those are and where I can find them.					
I know where to access the calendar of curriculum review for keeping instructional materials and approaches current and evidence based.					

Local Workspace

Consider the impact standards alignment is having on literacy in your community.

What positive actions should continue and be celebrated?	
What unproductive practices should be discontinued?	
What immediate steps can be taken?	
What topics should be researched?	
What challenges/roadblocks should be addressed?	
What is a goal one year from now?	

Instructing with Precision

Vision

All students have access to a literacy rich, responsive, and holistic learning environment that empowers them to reach their full potential.

Mission

It is the goal of North Dakota to support all learners in attaining a level of literacy allowing them to:

- **Accurately communicate ideas to others, and**
- **Independently access knowledge for self and world improvement.**

Action

Literacy skills are supported through evidence-based instructional practices focused on developmentally appropriate strategies. Literacy strategies incorporate explicit and systematic instruction of word recognition, language development and text comprehension that are responsive to individual student needs.

All educational stakeholders engage learners in reading, writing, speaking, listening and critical thinking skills by using evidence-based instructional and assessment practices to ensure all learners continue to grow in literacy.

Components of Literacy Development -

Learning to Read (learning how to read, write and communicate)
- **Oral Language**: listening and speaking using words to communicate.
- **Phonological Awareness**: ability to hear and manipulate chunks of sounds in words.
- **Phonemic Awareness**: ability to hear and manipulate individual letter sounds in words.
- **Alphabetic Principle**: ability to associate a written symbol to a sound.
- **Phonics**: instructional method that teaches letter sound correspondences in reading, writing, and spelling.
- **Vocabulary**: words understood by an individual including oral and written forms.
- **Fluency**: ability to read easily and accurately.
- **Comprehension**: ability to understand what is read or heard.
- **Writing**: act of using written symbols to represent words and thoughts.

Language Comprehension

- Background Knowledge
- Vocabulary Knowledge
- Language Structures
- Verbal Reasoning
- Literacy Knowledge

Increasingly Strategic
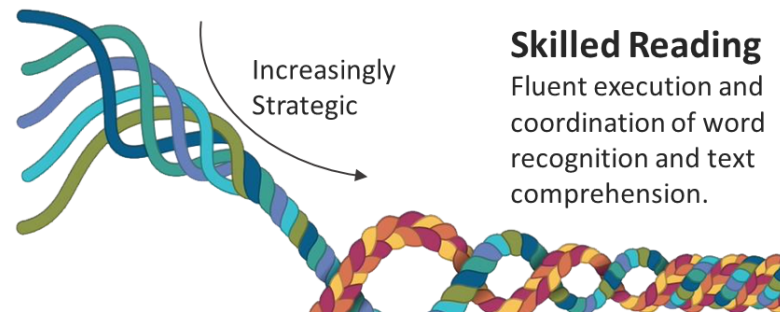
Skilled Reading
Fluent execution and coordination of word recognition and text comprehension.

Word Recognition

- Phonological Awareness
- Decoding (and Spelling)
- Sight Recognition

Increasingly Automatic

Scarborough, H. 2001. Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory, and practice. Pp. 97-110 in S. B. Neuman & D. K. Dickinson (Eds.) *Handbook of Early Literacy.* NY: Guilford Press.

Components of Disciplinary Literacy - **Reading to Learn** (reading, writing, and communicating in a discipline with a focus on thinking and skills related to a specific discipline, i.e., read/write like a scientist, mathematician, historian).

General Teaching Strategies for Supporting Students in Reading Across the Content Areas

Teach academic language in all content areas in both English and in the students' first language to provide consistency throughout the school day.[10]

Use a variety of instructional resources to increase student interest and motivation.[11]

Allow for student choice to increase motivation and to help match students to their preferred learning styles and ability levels.[12]

Provide strategies for students to use when faced with unfamiliar text such as using narrative to create personal connections to the reading.[13]

Provide strategies to approach texts from different content areas with varying lenses; for example, teaching students to "read like historians" when reading in history class.[14]

Use interdisciplinary teaming for consistent strategy implementation throughout the school day.[15]

Use summaries to reinforce connections and provide a more concise understanding of large texts.[16]

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Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Pacific serves educators in American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Hawai'i, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau. To address the priorities and interests of these jurisdictions, REL Pacific works in partnership with school districts, state departments of education, and others to use data and research to improve academic outcomes for students. For a full list of references, please visit https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/

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Key Content Literacy Strategies

- Teach academic vocabulary consistently.
- Motivate students with a variety of instructional resources and text sets built around key topics.
- Allow and encourage student choice in materials and approaches.
- Routinely incorporate writing and discussion as key approaches for understanding concepts.
- Teach specific and varied strategies for addressing unfamiliar text, vocabulary, and concepts.
- Instructors should seek to clearly understand literacy within their specific discipline to teach students how to engage to learn in that specific content. (This goes beyond generic strategies such as summary, KWL charts and Cornell notes to address how each subject uses literacy to construct meaning).

Multi-Tiered System of Support

A framework that provides instruction and targeted interventions to support all learners.

Tier I

Providing high-quality core instruction to all students with differentiation incorporating the features of effective instruction which are:
- Explicit instruction (including gradual release) with modeling
- Systematic instruction with scaffolding
- Multiple opportunities to practice & respond
- Immediate and corrective feedback
- Intentional time and judicious review

Tier II

In addition to Tier I instruction, learners scoring slightly below a school's benchmark cut-point receive additional instruction and progress monitoring to focused on rapid deficit skill recovery such as
- Phonemic awareness
- Decoding (phonics and word study)
- Fluency (accuracy and automaticity)
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension

Tier III

Tier III targets instruction for at-risk learners, including those who do not make adequate progress in Tier II instruction. Instruction is based on diagnostic evidence specific to individual learner needs.
- Foundational reading skills
- Customized frequency, duration, and dosage of instruction
- Systematic and explicit
- Consistent progress monitoring

NDMTSS 5 Essential Components

ASSESSMENT	DATA-BASED DECISION MAKING	MULTI-TIERED INSTRUCTION	INFRASTRUCTURE & SUPPORT MECHANISMS	FIDELITY & EVALUATION

https://www.ndmtss.org

Resources:

All age bands

- NDMTSS Playbook:
  https://www.ndrea.org/index.php?id=40
- ND State Library Online Resources:
  http://www.library.nd.gov/onlineresources.html
- North Dakota State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators:
  https://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/equitable/ndequityplan82815.pdf
- ND Title IX Educational Equity:
  https://www.nd.gov/dpi/policyguidelines/civil-rights/title-ix-educational-equity#:~:text=No%20person%20in%20the%20United,activity%20receiving%20federal%20financial%20assistance

PreK-age 5

- Teaching Beginning Readers:
  https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BuM6CfyVQWS6u-aHrgPShy3piqwtmWRb/view

K-5

- Teaching Writing to Elementary Students:
  https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CDe4dGAlYpldRCYXRxGG9of4CFktFxGF/view

Secondary (6-12)

- Strategies for Supporting Secondary Reading:
  https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YHa2n6kFhPUCVOdVo5Muondo1fu-N2GE/view
- Wisconsin Disciplinary Literacy Site:
  https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/cal/pdf/section2.pdf

Instructing with Precision Reflection Activity

Read the statements below from the perspective of each stakeholder group listed. Determine whether members of the stakeholder groups would consider the statement to be true. If yes, place a check in the box; if no, explore why and how that situation can be improved.	Students	K-12 Educators / ECE Partners	Administrators	School Board Members	Families and Community Members
I know what learning objectives are and where to reference an objective of any classroom lesson.					
I can easily access expectations and assignments for any class.					
I know how to access student progress records and grades.					
I know what I can do to supplement learning deficiencies that may be present, or I know where to find resources.					
I understand the difference between core instruction, strategic intervention, and intensive support and why it matters.					
I know how to find out if a practice being used meets evidence-based standards.					
I understand the importance and role of literacy instruction and assessment within all content areas.					
I foster relationships that support literacy transitions from one grade level to the next and among the various stakeholders supporting a learner at any point.					

Local Workspace

Consider the impact literacy instruction is having in your community.

What positive actions should continue and be celebrated?	
What unproductive practices should be discontinued?	
What immediate steps can be taken?	
What topics should be researched?	
What challenges/roadblocks should be addressed?	
What is a goal one year from now?	

Assessing to Inform

Vision

Learners receive instruction based on a body of evidence that is used to drive decisions.

Action

Learners develop in unique ways and at varied paces. Professionals assess learner skills to ensure learning is occurring and inform decision making at the student level and system level. School and early childhood professionals use data and feedback to monitor and adjust all decisions impacting literacy.

> **Mission**
>
> **It is the goal of North Dakota to support all learners in attaining a level of literacy allowing them to:**
> - **Accurately communicate ideas to others, and**
> - **Independently access knowledge for self and world improvement.**

Assessments must be valid and reliable. There is alignment between standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Educators ensure fidelity to assessment delivery and timeliness in delivery and response. Educators collaborate around the analysis of assessment results to inform classroom instruction, MTSS decision making, and program evaluation.

Assessing

Observing, collecting, and reviewing measures of student knowledge and skills to make instructional decisions in ongoing formal and informal processes before, during and after learning for the purposes of:

Screening/Benchmarking: Quickly and efficiently measures overall ability or critical skills of all students at specific times of the year such as beginning of year (BOY) or middle of year (MOY) to identify possible intervention and instructional needs.

Diagnosing: Administering specific assessments to determine detailed information to develop a targeted learning plan for individual students to address areas of strengths and for growth.

Monitoring Progress/Formative Assessment: Frequently and routinely measuring progress toward specific goals as part of instruction.

Measuring Outcomes/Summative Assessment: Assessing all students at the end of a unit, grading period, or year to provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of instruction and student achievement compared to grade-level performance standards.

Continuous Improvement: Critically examining the effectiveness of a system at multiple levels. Evaluation processes are cyclical emphasizing continuous improvement to ensure success of all learners.
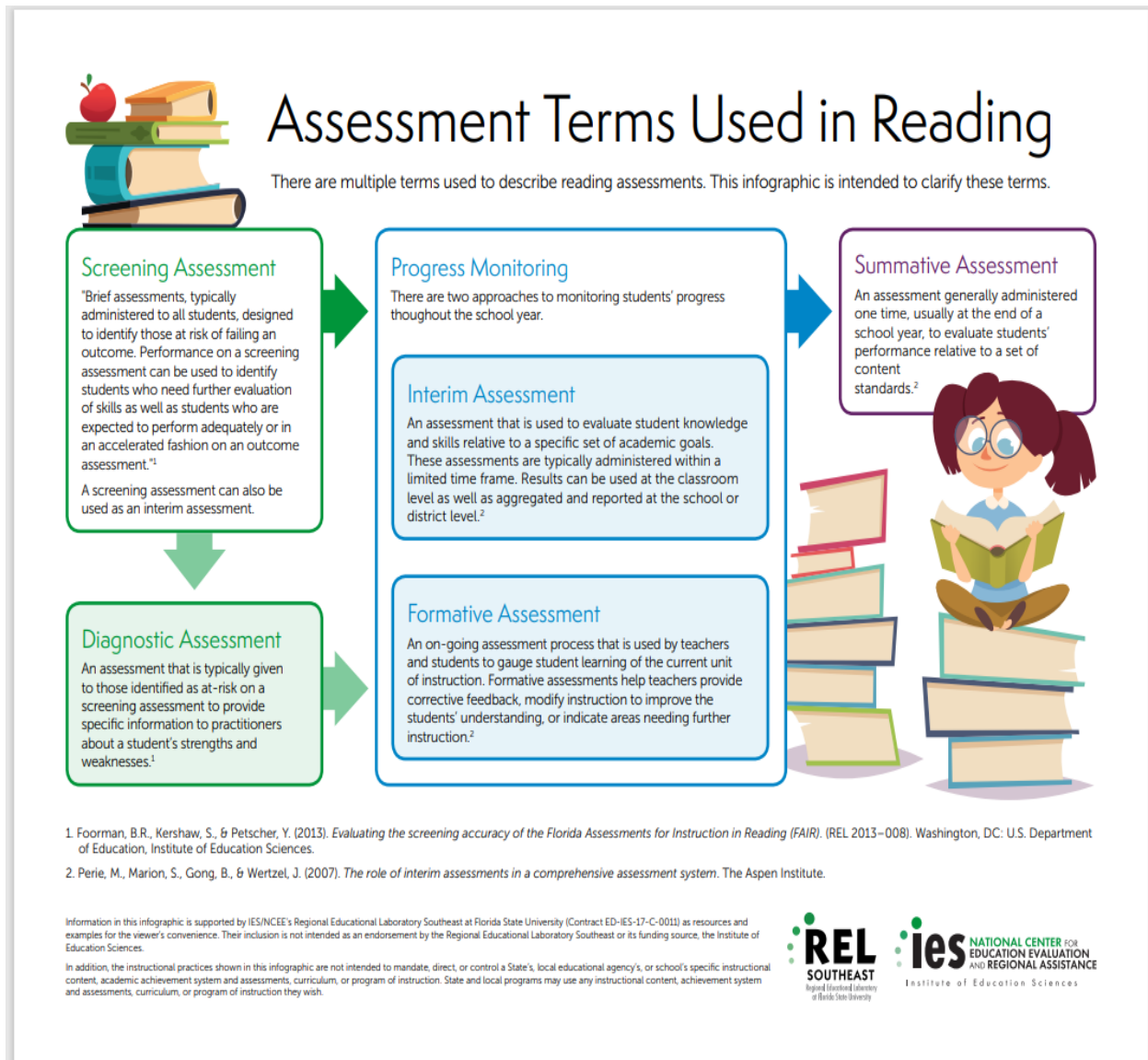
Resources:
- North Dakota Data Dashboard: Insights
  https://insights.nd.gov/
- ND MTSS:
  https://www.ndmtss.org/
- DPI Assessment:
  https://www.nd.gov/dpi/districtsschools/assessment

Assessment Terms Used in Reading

There are multiple terms used to describe reading assessments. This infographic is intended to clarify these terms.

Screening Assessment

"Brief assessments, typically administered to all students, designed to identify those at risk of failing an outcome. Performance on a screening assessment can be used to identify students who need further evaluation of skills as well as students who are expected to perform adequately or in an accelerated fashion on an outcome assessment."[1]

A screening assessment can also be used as an interim assessment.

Progress Monitoring

There are two approaches to monitoring students' progress thoughout the school year.

Interim Assessment

An assessment that is used to evaluate student knowledge and skills relative to a specific set of academic goals. These assessments are typically administered within a limited time frame. Results can be used at the classroom level as well as aggregated and reported at the school or district level.[2]

Summative Assessment

An assessment generally administered one time, usually at the end of a school year, to evaluate students' performance relative to a set of content standards.[2]

Diagnostic Assessment

An assessment that is typically given to those identified as at-risk on a screening assessment to provide specific information to practitioners about a student's strengths and weaknesses.[1]

Formative Assessment

An on-going assessment process that is used by teachers and students to gauge student learning of the current unit of instruction. Formative assessments help teachers provide corrective feedback, modify instruction to improve the students' understanding, or indicate areas needing further instruction.[2]

1. Foorman, B.R., Kershaw, S., & Petscher, Y. (2013). *Evaluating the screening accuracy of the Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading (FAIR).* (REL 2013–008). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences.

2. Perie, M., Marion, S., Gong, B., & Wertzel, J. (2007). *The role of interim assessments in a comprehensive assessment system.* The Aspen Institute.

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Assessing to Inform Reflection Activity

Read the statements below from the perspective of each stakeholder group listed. Determine whether members of the stakeholder groups would consider the statement to be true. If yes, place a check in the box; if no, explore why and how that situation can be improved.	Students	K-12 Educators/ ECE Partners	Administrators	School Board Members	Families and Community Members
I know what assessments are given across the district/community from Birth through Grade 12.					
I can find information about the content of assessments used within my district and know who to ask if I need help.					
I can easily understand results and data that are presented to me from the district.					
My district offers me opportunities to learn about the data that is important to me and how I can use it.					
My district has made it clear to me why assessments and results are important.					
I understand the different types and purposes of assessments.					
I know what academic-related records are maintained in the community for children from Birth through Grade 12 and how to utilize them to maximize student literacy skill progression.					
I understand how to use data to establish and measure improvement goals.					
I know how to determine if a program is being implemented with fidelity.					

Local Workspace

Consider the impact assessment is having on literacy in your community.

What positive actions should continue and be celebrated?	
What unproductive practices should be discontinued?	
What immediate steps can be taken?	
What topics should be researched?	
What challenges/roadblocks should be addressed?	
What is a goal one year from now?	

Glossary

Choice Ready is a component within the North Dakota Accountability system and describes a student graduating with the knowledge, skills, and disposition to be successful in whatever they choose to do, whether they pursue a post-secondary degree, enroll in a technical college, enter the workforce, or join the military.

Culturally Responsive Teaching & Instructional Resources - Culturally responsive teaching increases the level of academic rigor for all learners, and requires cultivating a physically, emotionally, and intellectually safe environment. This includes utilizing evidence-based instruction and assessment practices, curriculum, and resources that reflect and acknowledge the diversity, identities, and experiences of all students.

Data-informed Instruction involves collecting examples of student performance, analyzing them for trends, and determining continuation or adjusted steps to achieve the desired outcome.

Disciplinary Literacy is an emphasis on approaching literacy within a content area as an expert in that content area would use it. Scientists, historians, and mathematicians each engage their literacy skills in different ways to understand and accomplish their work. Disciplinary literacy takes reading and writing beyond textbook and classroom tasks to real world application.

Diversity is understanding every individual is unique and recognizing individual differences. Diversity includes, but is not limited to ethnicity, race, physical abilities/qualities, gender, sexual orientation, as well as religious status, gender expression, educational background, geographical location, socioeconomic status, political association, and life experiences.

Equity provides an environment where differences are recognized and acknowledged with the appropriate levels of support needed for every individual to meet their maximum potential.

Evidence-based programs and practices are demonstrated through research to have a statistically significant impact on student learning outcomes. Evidence-based programs are studied within actual classroom settings. ESSA emphasizes the use of evidence-based programs and practices and outlines four levels of effectiveness.

Explicit Instruction is a structured, systematic, and direct teaching approach that includes stating goals, modeling and clearly explaining, and then withdrawing support as students move toward independence.

Literacy encompasses reading, writing, speaking, listening, and critical thinking skills across contexts.

School and early childhood professionals include those working with children from birth through grade12, such as teachers, administrators, early learning professionals, childcare providers, or those serving in related care and education roles.

Science of Reading is the body of research which combines several disciplines to provide an understanding of the processes involved in reading, where challenges generally occur, and how that relates to reading instruction choices including preventive and remedial approaches.

The Six Essential Elements are the organizing categories of the ND Comprehensive Literacy Plan which the Literacy Team has deemed critical to system function to provide high-quality literacy instruction for all children.

Stakeholder is any person or entity that stands to benefit from effective literacy outcomes. Stakeholders may include**:**
- Students
- Families
- School and Early Childhood Professional Leaders and Staff
- Community Partners
- Elected officials