



NEVADA
Department of
Education

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PreK–12 Nevada State Literacy Plan

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Superintendent's Letter

Dear Nevadans,

As the Superintendent of Public Instruction, I am honored to introduce the updated Nevada State Literacy Plan (NSLP). This plan reflects our collective commitment to improving literacy outcomes for all students across our great state. Literacy is foundational not only for academic success but also for equipping our students to thrive in the modern world, whether they pursue college, careers, or civic life.

Our “North Star” remains clear: For all Nevada students to graduate with the necessary literacy skills to be future-ready and globally prepared for postsecondary success and civic life. Achieving this vision requires a shared responsibility among educators and leaders at every level of our education system. Moreover, the NSLP serves as a call to action for all of us to focus on the literacy needs of Nevada’s students.

With increased state funding for PreK–12 education, Nevada has more resources to make a measurable difference in student outcomes, and with Governor Lombardo’s Acing Accountability initiative, the state also has a mandate to focus on measuring student outcomes in literacy. The updated NSLP introduces key enhancements to improve our approach to literacy, including the following:

- **Vertical Alignment:** A comprehensive approach to literacy that addresses all grade levels and their specific needs, ensuring students receive support wherever they are in their literacy journey
- **Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS):** Clear guidance on using MTSS to address students’ literacy needs in real time, ensuring that no student falls behind
- **Updated Scientific Research:** Incorporation of relevant literacy research to ensure that our instructional methods are based on evidence and best practices
- **Adolescent Literacy:** A deeper focus on preparing older students for the complex reading demands of various disciplines to ensure college and career readiness

The NSLP provides guidance to address the current challenges our students face while anticipating the needs of the future. Together, we can ensure that every Nevada student has the opportunity to succeed and thrive through literacy.

Thank you for your partnership in this important work.

Sincerely,

Jhone M. Ebert

Superintendent of Public Instruction
Nevada Department of Education

Preface

Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 385.010 established the Nevada Department of Education (NDE), which consists of the State Board of Education and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. NDE leads and collaborates with Nevada’s 17 school districts and the State Public Charter School Authority. This includes regular collaboration to ensure that state and federal requirements are met and that students and educators are supported. NDE also collaborates with educational partners, including childcare providers, the Nevada System of Higher Education, and Regional Professional Development Programs to improve student achievement and educator effectiveness.

NDE is organized to effectively administer the state and federal programs that support educational efforts in public and private schools to meet the needs of Nevada’s students and their families. The outline below provides a brief overview of how NDE is organized.

Nevada State Board of Education

- Dr. Katherine Dockweiler, President
- Tim Hughes, Vice President
- Tamara Hudson, Clerk
- Dr. Tricia Braxton
- Tate Else
- Danielle Ford
- Michael Keyes
- Angela Orr
- Annette Owens
- Mike Walker

Office of the Superintendent

- Executive Team
- Communications Team

Student Investment Division

- Office of District Support Services
- Office of Division Compliance
- Office of Financial Operations
- Office of Pupil-Centered Funding

Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement Division

- Office of Career Readiness, Adult Learning, and Education Options
- Office of Educator Development, Licensure, and Family Engagement
- Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment

Student Achievement Division

- Office of Assessment, Data, and Accountability Management
- Office of Early Learning and Development
- Office of Inclusive Education
- Office of Student and School Supports
- Office of Teaching and Learning

During the 82nd session of the Nevada State Legislature, funding was allocated to NDE to revise and update the 2015 Nevada State Literacy Plan (NSLP). During the same period, Governor Joe Lombardo committed \$2.6 billion in increased funding to PreK–12 education through the Acing Accountability initiative, with the goal of directly tying funding to student performance.

As part of Acing Accountability, each school district, the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA), and its charter holders will be assessed based on the following Essential Questions:

- To what degree are school districts and the SPCSA effectively implementing reading and mathematics resources?
- To what degree are kindergarten through grade 3 students demonstrating progress toward mastery in literacy?
- To what degree are grades 4 through 8 students demonstrating growth and proficiency in mathematics?
- To what degree are high school graduates prepared for success in college or a career?
- To what degree do school districts and the SPCSA have the workforce to meet the needs of every student?
- To what degree are school districts and the SPCSA using innovative solutions to meet the unique needs of their students?

The revised PreK–12 NSLP is a foundation for improvement, providing local education agencies (LEAs) with guidance to develop the policies and practices necessary to address the needs of all Nevada children, including those who are the most vulnerable.

Audiences for this plan are as follows:

Policymakers – State and local legislatures, school boards, councils, and civic organizations responsible for allocating funds and directing policies to guide educational efforts

Administrators – LEA- and site-level administrators responsible for developing and implementing policies and programs while guiding improvements

Educators – Teachers and education support professionals who are interested in what NDE has prioritized in evidence-based practices central to their work

Community Members – All who are interested in what NDE is doing to provide the children of Nevada with literacy knowledge and skills to become functional, contributing members of the State of Nevada and the nation

Overview

Purpose

The purpose of the PreK–12 Nevada State Literacy Plan (NSLP) is to provide a blueprint for **improving literacy outcomes for all Nevada students**. This plan will inform Nevada’s educational leaders about literacy development, instruction, and assessment across the PreK–12 continuum. Additionally, this plan will provide local education agencies (LEAs) and charter organizations with **actionable guidance** to develop policies and practices necessary to improve literacy outcomes in Nevada. This plan also serves as a **call to action** to regional and state leaders, policymakers, and legislators to support the literacy development of all Nevada students.

Nevada’s “North Star” is this:

For all Nevada students to graduate with the necessary literacy skills to be future-ready and globally prepared for postsecondary success and civic life.

Ensuring that all students emerge from Nevada’s education system future-ready is facing more and more challenges, not the least of which is the interrupted learning many students experienced during their early elementary education due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many elementary students who participated in distance learning during the pandemic continue to need support to fully develop their foundational skills. Additionally, schools are seeing an increase in newcomer students who require extra assistance in mastering English.

Supporting the literacy development for all Nevada students is a shared responsibility, involving legislators, state and local leaders, educators, and caregivers across the PreK–12 system. We are all charged with providing students with the skills and understandings required to make this future a reality. Toward this goal, the NSLP will:

- communicate Nevada’s current literacy challenges;
- strengthen connections between existing state initiatives;
- encourage collaboration (horizontal and vertical) throughout the PreK–12 grade span; and
- define a comprehensive instructional approach for literacy achievement, providing a continuum for coherent literacy education and evidence-based practices for literacy improvement for all Nevada students.

Nevada Department of Education’s Mission and Values

As stated in the Statewide Plan for the Improvement of Pupils,¹ the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) Mission and Values are as follows:

Mission: Improve student achievement and educator effectiveness by ensuring opportunities, facilitating learning, and promoting excellence.

Values:

- **Equity:** The learning needs of every student are supported in an environment where all students are valued, are respected, and see themselves in their curriculum and instructional materials while experiencing academic success without regard to differences in age, gender, socioeconomic status, religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, native language, national origin, or citizenship status.
- **Access to Quality:** Students, educators, and families have opportunities to take full advantage of Nevada’s education system, regardless of their ZIP Code, district, or setting.
- **Success:** Lead the nation in the excellence and rigor of our standards, assessments, and outcomes for students and educators.
- **Inclusivity:** Learners are served in their least restrictive environment in culturally responsive and sustaining schools.
- **Community:** NDE collaborates with educators, districts, families, stakeholders, and partner agencies to lead a high-performing and responsive system of education for all Nevadans.
- **Transparency:** Districts, schools, and communities are served through efficient and effective use of public funds and fulfillment of statutory responsibilities.

The NSLP will be revisited annually to assess how it is enhancing literacy initiatives and continuing to meet NDE’s Mission and Values. It will be revised as needed.

An Updated Plan for All Nevada Students

The last decade of literacy research and the reality of living in a post-pandemic era has provided new perspectives and evidenced-based recommendations to build on the foundation established in the 2015 NSLP.

The updated NSLP revises the 2015 plan in the following ways:

- **Vertical Alignment** – Rather than separating recommendations by grade level, the updated NSLP offers a comprehensive and vertically aligned approach to literacy in the service of the Nevada Academic Content Standards. This approach allows for all LEAs to support students with their specific literacy needs, regardless of their grade. At the same time, Appendix 1 includes helpful briefs that can help educators and leaders focus literacy instruction within specific grade bands.
- **Multi-Tiered System of Supports** – The shift from Response to Intervention (RTI) to Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) in the last decade affords Nevada a system for identifying and responding to the literacy needs of all Nevada students in real time. The updated NSLP offers clear guidance on what MTSS is and how to use it at the systems level to support all students.
- **Updated Scientific Research** – The last decade of literacy research has expanded the understanding of literacy learning and has provided specific additions to guidance on reading instruction. The new plan amplifies the research that provides evidence-based recommendations for instruction and aligns with Nevada’s Read by Grade 3 legislation.²
- **A Deeper Focus on Adolescent Literacy** – The 2015 plan spanned Pre-K through adult literacy, and the updated NSLP spans PreK–12. With respect to adolescent readers, the updated NSLP now includes expanded references to complex text and reading within different academic disciplines, to reflect the Nevada Academic Content Standards and to ensure that Nevada’s students are prepared for college and career success.

Navigating the 2025 Nevada State Literacy Plan

WHAT IT IS...

- A guidance and information document that:
 - » Defines the components of a comprehensive literacy approach
 - » Prioritizes key evidence-based practices to improve literacy
 - » Provides actionable guidance and resources to support literacy planning

WHAT IT IS NOT...

- A compliance document
- A replacement for existing literacy initiatives
- A set of directives
- A toolkit for literacy instruction or planning

The PreK–12 NSLP is organized around the six priority areas as the levers for literacy improvement (see page 9).

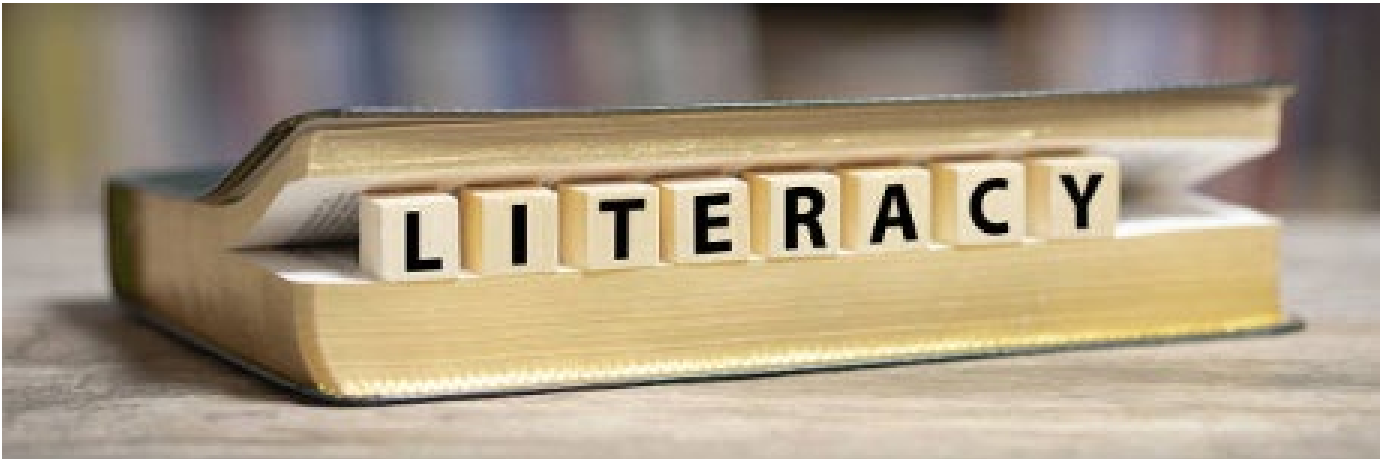
Each section contains:

- a description of each topic, including research evidence for why it was selected;
- a set of key practices for each topic; and
- a selection of actions for implementation for each key practice.

At the end of the document, you will find the following appendices along with additional reference material:

- Appendix 1: Considerations by Grade Span
- Appendix 2: Additional Resources to Support Implementation
- Appendix 3: State Demographic and Needs Assessment Data
- Appendix 4: Current Legislation, Initiatives, and Policies
- Appendix 5: Glossary
- Appendix 6: Nevada's Family Engagement Framework

Nevada's Definition of Literacy



Literacy is the ability to actively and critically read, write, speak, and listen across all academic content areas and/or career pathways in order to construct meaning and communicate effectively. A literate individual is able to independently and collaboratively function in a global society by using evidence, creativity, questioning, reflection, and problem-solving skills.

The updated NSLP focuses on the key systems and evidence-based practices necessary to support all PreK–12 students in Nevada to have competence and confidence in reading and writing and the prerequisite oral language skills for both. Although literacy is broader than just reading and writing, these are the most critical areas of growth for all Nevada students.

Science of Reading in Nevada

Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 392.748 defines reading to include, without limitation, phonological and phonemic awareness, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The science of reading refers to a broad, evidence-based body of research across disciplines such as education, cognitive science, linguistics, and psychology that is focused on understanding how individuals learn to read, the processes involved in reading development, and the most effective instructional practices for teaching reading. This includes insights and information regarding all of the elements of reading as outlined in NRS 392.748.

The following key components are necessary to ensure that educators are prepared with the knowledge, understanding, and skills to effectively teach reading and improve reading outcomes for students:

1. Evidence-Based Instruction

Evidence-based reading instruction is grounded in research that has been proven to help students, including those with diverse backgrounds, learn to read more efficiently and effectively, enhancing their overall literacy skills. These practices should occur across all grade levels, from Pre-K through 12th grade.

2. Explicit and Systematic Instruction

Explicit instruction is clear, unambiguous instruction targeting specific reading skills, whereas systematic instruction involves teaching skills in a logical, sequential order. Each skill builds upon previously learned skills, ensuring that learning progresses in an organized and cohesive manner. This approach to reading instruction enhances student learning, supports diverse needs, and helps educators deliver effective and efficient instruction. Effective reading instruction should also focus on fostering a love for reading, enhancing student motivation, and actively engaging students in the learning process. Without motivation, even evidence-based practices may not be as impactful.

3. Early Intervention and the Use of Multi-Tiered System of Supports

MTSS provides a structured framework for delivering differentiated instruction and targeted interventions based on student needs. Early intervention and the use of MTSS is key to preventing long-term reading struggles and supporting students in developing strong reading skills. By systematically delivering varying levels of support, MTSS ensures that all students receive the appropriate instruction and resources needed to develop foundational skills and improve reading proficiency. The best outcomes for students, including those with diverse learning needs, occur with early intervention.

4. Data-Driven Decision Making

Data-driven decision making involves using evidence and assessments to inform instructional practices and interventions. By analyzing student performance data, educators can tailor instruction to address specific needs, track progress, and make informed adjustments to enhance reading outcomes. This approach ensures that teaching methods are effective and responsive to the actual needs of students.

5. Literacy Specialists

Literacy specialists provide coaching, guidance, and support in implementing evidence-based reading practices and interventions. They help educators analyze student data to develop and refine instructional strategies, ensure fidelity to research-based methods, and address individual student needs, thereby enhancing overall reading outcomes.

6. Professional Development

Professional development equips educators with the latest research-based strategies and methodologies for effective reading instruction and ensures that they stay updated on best practices to improve student literacy outcomes.

7. Cultural Responsiveness

Cultural responsiveness ensures that teaching practices are inclusive and relevant to students from diverse backgrounds, enhancing engagement and learning outcomes. The science of reading emphasizes evidence-based methods for teaching literacy, focusing on phonics, phonemic awareness, and other foundational skills. When combined, cultural responsiveness and the science of reading create a more equitable learning environment by addressing individual needs and leveraging students' cultural contexts to support effective literacy development.

8. Family and Community Engagement

Family engagement fosters a collaborative approach to support student literacy development by leveraging families' insights and reinforcing reading practices at home. It is important for educators to ensure that culturally and linguistically relevant strategies are used to support reading development in a way that respects and incorporates the unique experiences of Nevada families and communities.

Clearly defining the science of reading and outlining its key components ensures consistency of understanding across the state, delivery of high-quality instructional opportunities, and alignment with evidence-based practices, ultimately leading to improved literacy outcomes for all students in Nevada.

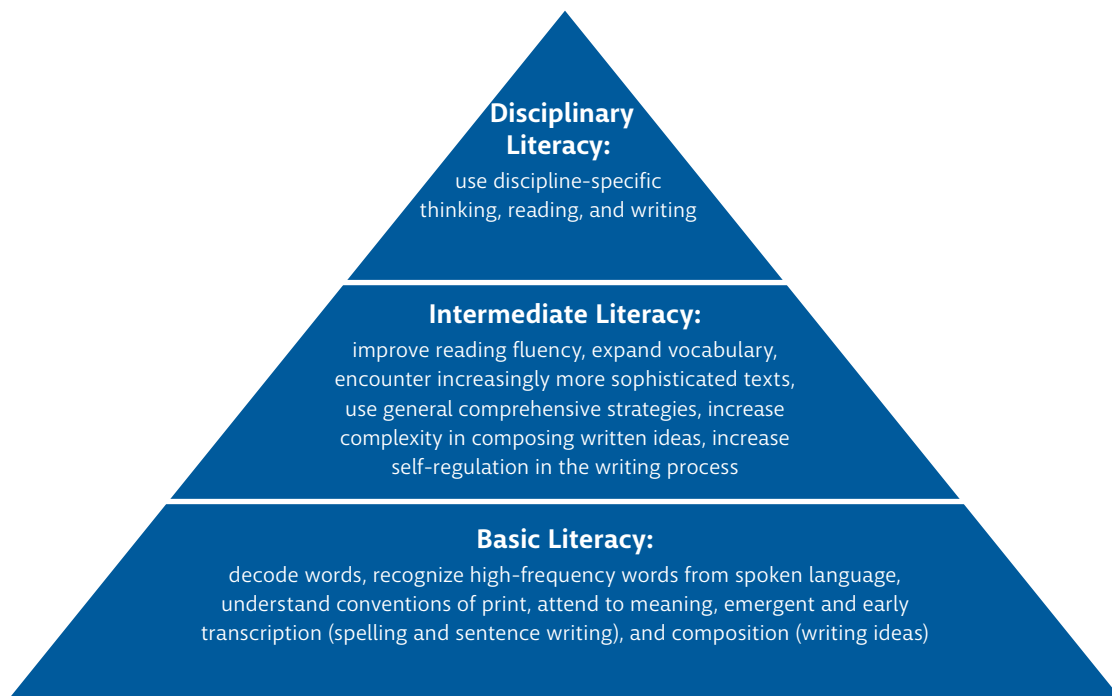
A New Pathway Forward: A Comprehensive and Vertically Aligned Approach to Literacy

According to the International Literacy Association, comprehensive literacy instruction is a type of instruction that addresses all aspects of reading and writing while also being equitable and responsive to the needs of individual students.³

Comprehensive reading and writing instruction, which also includes attention to oral language, is the focus of the updated NSLP. Oral language has a reciprocal relationship with reading development,⁴ and it supports and reinforces reading instruction. Evidence-based writing instruction is also essential for students to achieve college and career readiness across the academic disciplines.⁵

Figure 1 shows a common pyramid of literacy development,⁶ slightly adapted to highlight the reciprocity of reading and writing. The pyramid illustrates that each stage of literacy development is a foundation for the next stage. However, students will progress through that development at different speeds and with different strengths. A comprehensive and vertically aligned approach to literacy instruction ensures that educators have access to information across grade levels and can identify strategies to meet all students where they are.

Figure 1. Pyramid of Literacy Development



Adapted from Shanahan and Shanahan, 2008⁷

To support students' literacy development, MTSS ensures that all students receive the instruction and intervention they need. MTSS is a tiered set of structures built on a foundation of strong Tier 1 instruction and assessment. In brief, the MTSS tiers are as follows:

Tier 1 – Universal Support for All Students

Tier 2 – Targeted Interventions for Students at Risk

Tier 3 – Individualized Support for Students with the Highest Need

Complete definitions of each tier can be found in the Multi-Tiered System of Supports section beginning on page 36. Developing a MTSS ensures that assessment and intervention systems are in place for those students who need additional support.

Figure 2 demonstrates examples of some core instructional targets of literacy instruction by grade span. It also shows examples of when specific instructional targets should receive emphasis in Tier 1 instruction and when they may surface as more intensive needs for intervention (Tiers 2 and 3) in later years. The level of intervention should always be determined by student need.

Figure 2. Example Core Instructional Targets of Literacy PreK–12

Core Instructional Targets	Pre-K	Grades 1–2	Grades 3–5	Grades 6–12
Phonological Awareness and Print Awareness				
Word Reading and Spelling				
Fluency				
Vocabulary and Morphology				
Text Structure and Reading Comprehension Strategies				
Writing				
Disciplinary Literacy				

	Tier 1 Universal Support for All Students (Highest Priority)
	Tier 1 Universal Support for All Students (Lower Priority)
	Tier 2 Targeted Interventions for Students at Risk
	Tier 3 Individualized Supports for Few Students

The NSLP Theory of Improvement

The 2025 Nevada State Literacy Plan’s Advisory Council identified six priority areas as the levers for literacy improvement: Tier 1 Instruction, Assessment, Multi-Tiered System of Supports, Leadership, Professional Development, and Family and Community Engagement. In the NSLP, the term *professional development* is used to align with current Nevada law and established regional programs. Effective professional development is sustained, intensive, collaborative, job embedded, data driven, and classroom focused.⁸

NDE believes that if it improves in these areas by 2030, it will be able to build the instructional capacity, systems, structures, leadership, and community partnerships necessary to achieve the following:

- Improve Nevada’s overall English Language Arts (ELA) growth in proficiency of grade K–2 students on the Spring Administration of the benchmark assessments. NDE is currently in the process of updating assessment tools for K–2. Specific goals will be determined once the assessment tools are finalized.
- Improve Nevada’s overall ELA proficiency to at least 60% of grade 3–8 students at or above proficient on the Smarter Balanced Assessment.
- Improve the average ACT reading scores for graduating students to 40% proficiency.

Figure 3. Nevada’s Theory of Improvement for Literacy

Goals	Primary Levers for Change	Inputs	Strategies/ Activities	Outcomes
<p>By 2030, improve Nevada’s overall ELA growth in proficiency of grade K–2 students on the Spring Administration of the benchmark assessments.</p> <p>By 2030, improve Nevada’s overall ELA proficiency to at least 60% of grade 3–8 students at or above proficient on the Smarter Balanced Assessment.</p> <p>By 2030, improve the average ACT reading score for graduating students to 40% at benchmark.</p>	Strong Tier 1 Instruction	<p>Nevada Academic Content Standards in ELA K–12</p> <p>Office of Teaching and Learning</p> <p>Nevada Pre–K Standards</p> <p>Nevada Educator Performance Framework–Teacher Instructional Practice Standards</p> <p>Guidelines for high-quality, standards-based instructional materials</p> <p>Recommendations for literacy instructional time</p> <p>Teacher collaboration and planning structures</p> <p>Dyslexia guidance documents</p> <p>Nevada English Language Development Standards and Instructional Supports</p>	<p>All students are centered as expert language users.</p> <p>Rich oral language experiences are provided.</p> <p>Foundational skills for literacy are explicitly and systematically taught.</p> <p>Reading comprehension of complex texts across formats, genres, and disciplines is scaffolded.</p> <p>The expression of written ideas for a variety of audiences is modeled and guided.</p>	<p>All students receiving high-quality, grade-level appropriate, core instruction</p> <p>Improved academic performance</p> <p>Improved college and career readiness indicators</p>

Goals	Primary Levers for Change	Inputs	Strategies/ Activities	Outcomes
	Assessment	<p>Office of Assessment, Data, and Accountability Management</p> <p>Pre–K literacy screening assessments</p> <p>Common K–8 screening assessments</p> <p>Recommendations for effective PreK–12 diagnostic and progress monitoring assessments</p> <p>Assessment literacy professional development</p>	<p>Administer developmentally appropriate literacy screening assessments to all students.</p> <p>Administer appropriate diagnostic and progress monitoring assessments to students who need/are receiving additional support.</p> <p>Administer annual state literacy assessments.</p>	<p>Improved data collection and availability</p> <p>Using data to understand effectiveness of interventions</p> <p>Measuring overall progress in literacy proficiency</p> <p>Ensuring all LEAs identify and adopt literacy diagnostic tools for PreK–12</p>
	Multi-Tiered System of Supports	<p>Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment</p> <p>MTSS professional development and coaching support</p> <p>District Systems Fidelity Inventory (DSFI)</p> <p>Improved student data collection tools, methods, and practices</p>	<p>Create, train, and support District Leadership Teams.</p> <p>Facilitate administration of the DSFI to inform district literacy plans.</p> <p>Provide MTSS training and coaching for school teams to support literacy.</p> <p>Provide differentiated instruction to meet the diverse learning needs of students.</p>	<p>Increased district capacity to train, monitor, improve, and evaluate MTSS implementation</p> <p>Increased school capacity, resources, and protocols to engage in data-driven discussions</p> <p>Increased fidelity of implementation of Tier 1 literacy practices</p>

Goals	Primary Levers for Change	Inputs	Strategies/ Activities	Outcomes
	Leadership	<p>Office of Educator Development and Support</p> <p>Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF)-School Administrator Instructional Leadership Standards</p> <p>Literacy professional development for leaders</p> <p>Professional development in observation and feedback for literacy instruction</p> <p>Assessment literacy professional development</p>	<p>Implement the NSLP.</p> <p>Provide clear instructional vision, goals, and expectations.</p> <p>Have regular observation and feedback cycles.</p> <p>Create and maintain systems to support literacy instruction.</p> <p>Monitor programs to ensure that students identified as performing below grade level are receiving appropriate Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3 supports.</p> <p>Address resource inequities that are barriers to all students receiving needed supports.</p>	<p>NSLP introduced to all Nevada LEAs</p> <p>District/LEA literacy plans developed and aligned with the NSLP</p> <p>Clear expectations for literacy instruction communicated</p> <p>All students below grade level receiving appropriate literacy support</p>
	Professional Development	<p>Nevada Standards for Professional Development</p> <p>Research-based professional development on literacy</p> <p>Regional professional development programs</p> <p>Nevada Adolescent Literacy Network</p>	<p>Provide curriculum-embedded professional development.</p> <p>Provide literacy coaching support for all PreK–5 teachers.</p> <p>Create literacy communities of practice.</p> <p>Enable reading certifications.</p>	<p>Increased literacy professional development participation</p> <p>Deeper knowledge at state and local levels about literacy support strategies</p> <p>Improved access to online resources to support literacy instruction</p> <p>Change in teacher knowledge and practice</p>

Goals	Primary Levers for Change	Inputs	Strategies/ Activities	Outcomes
	Family and Community Engagement	<p>Nevada Family Engagement Framework</p> <p>Office of Educator Development, Licensure, and Family Engagement</p> <p>Advisory Council for Family Engagement</p> <p>Regional professional development programs</p>	<p>Develop a strengths-based mindset and approach regarding literacy.</p> <p>Build parent/family relationships around literacy.</p> <p>Develop effective communication systems.</p> <p>Share decision making for literacy priorities.</p>	<p>Parents evident in active roles in school and district literacy plan development</p> <p>Improved parent participation in literacy-based activities</p>



Core academic knowledge is the foundation from which students can apply durable skills, enabling them to build a life, a home, and a future for themselves, their families, and their communities.⁹



—From *Portrait of a Nevada Learner*

Tier 1 Instruction

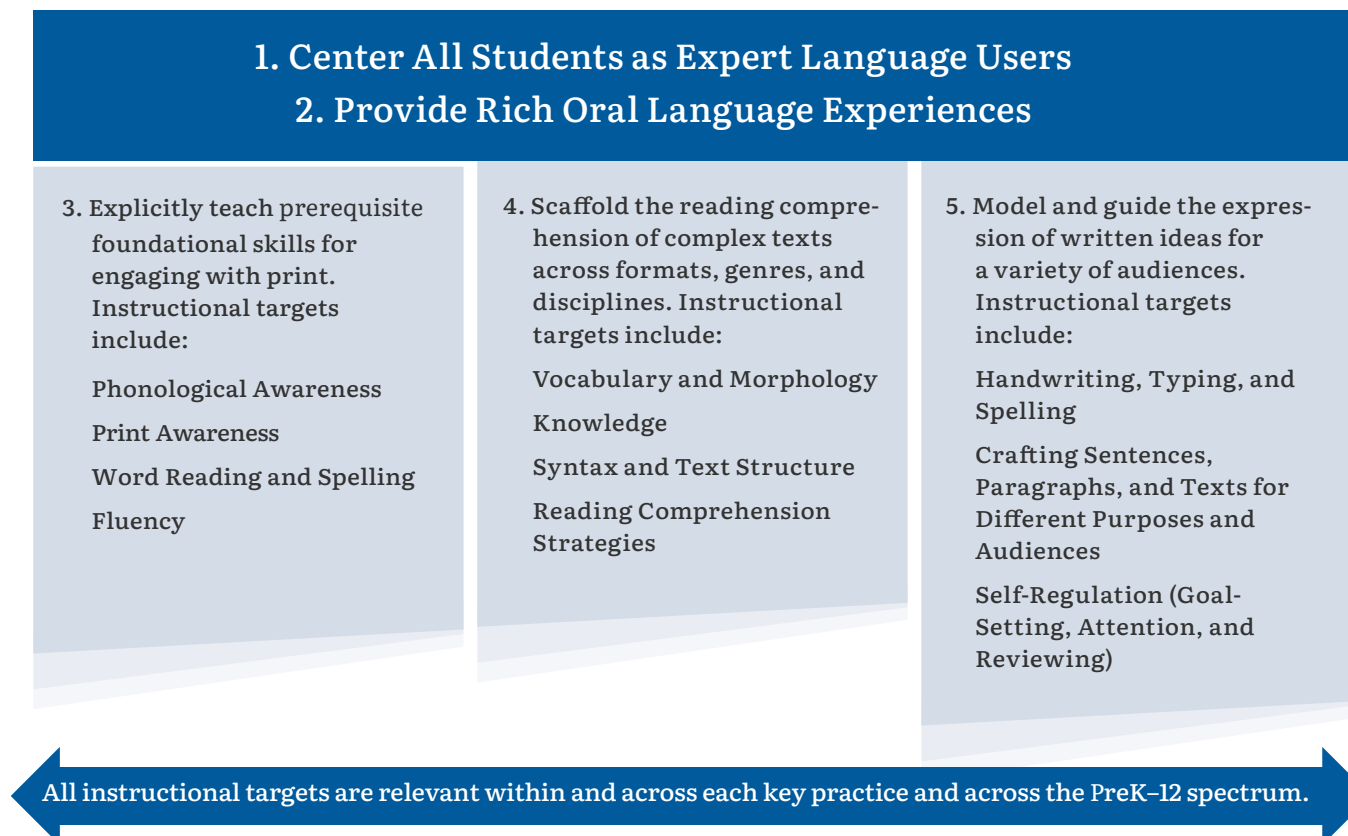
Tier 1 Instruction

This section describes the core of the Nevada State Literacy Plan: **equity-oriented, comprehensive, and effective Tier 1 literacy instruction**. Figure 4 presents Nevada’s approach to Tier 1 literacy instruction. Specifically, it calls out these five key practices, along with corresponding instructional targets:

1. Center All Students as Expert Language Users
2. Provide Rich Oral Language Experiences
3. Explicitly Teach Prerequisite Foundational Skills for Engaging with Print
4. Scaffold the Reading Comprehension of Complex Texts Across Formats, Genres, and Disciplines
5. Model and Guide the Expression of Written Ideas for a Variety of Audiences

Figure 4 also shows that all five key practices interact with each other—that together, they make up an *integrated* approach to Tier 1 instruction, rather than being a set of five isolated steps. And finally, Figure 4 is fully aligned with Nevada’s commitment to the rich body of research that comprises the science of reading and the science of writing.

Figure 4. Five Key Practices for Tier 1 Literacy Instruction with Specific Instructional Targets



Importantly, as highlighted by the arrow at the bottom of Figure 4, the instructional targets for each key practice are *generally* grouped. **The instructional targets are not mutually exclusive, nor do they *belong* only to the key practice with which they are listed.** Here are three examples of overlaps:

- While writing might be perceived as an advanced literacy target, it has a reciprocal relationship with reading and language from the earliest grades.¹⁰ Supporting emergent writers in Pre–K is essential for writing development through 12th grade.
- Learning to read fluently (with accuracy, expression, and appropriate speed) is a critical foundational skill that young readers need to develop.¹¹ However, learning to read a second-grade text fluently will do little to support a student reading a primary source document in a history class in middle or high school. Fluency predicts reading comprehension, and older readers continue to need support with fluency skills that they can leverage in increasingly complex texts.¹²
- Reading and spelling words involves a set of skills that are enhanced by knowledge of vocabulary and morphology (knowledge of roots and affixes) at all ages—learning any of these in isolation is less effective than attending to sound, spelling, and meaning together.¹³ Consider the words *variety* and *variable*, words that students are likely to encounter in secondary classrooms. The root *vari*, which means change or difference, is in both words, but it is pronounced differently in each word. Attending to both spelling and the meaning of the root *vari* can help students read and understand words.

Key Practice 1: Center All Students as Expert Language Users

The first key practice, centering all students as expert language users, emphasizes the equity orientation necessary for effective Tier 1 literacy instruction.¹⁴ All Nevada students enter classrooms with a wealth of language knowledge for the communicative contexts they know best. Although not all language expertise that students bring to classrooms overlaps with the language students are expected to use in school, ***all students have language expertise that can inform and support their success in school.***¹⁵ Operating from this assumption is equity oriented because it both honors and leverages the cultural and linguistic strengths that *all* Nevada students bring to their classrooms.¹⁶ ***Nevada’s richly diverse student population needs and deserves instruction that elevates their strengths and builds on them.***

Actions for Implementation for Centering All Students as Expert Language Users

- Encourage students to draw on *all* language resources they bring to the classroom, including different languages and different varieties of English (e.g., African American Vernacular English).
- Encourage and celebrate translanguaging, which is when speakers draw on all of their language resources in an integrated way. This fluid and flexible language use is very natural for speakers of multiple languages and dialects, and creating space for this in classrooms can promote more language practice as well as a sense of belonging.
- Help students make connections between the language they know and the language they are learning. This includes making connections between different dialects as well as making connections between English and different languages.
- Teach students that all dialects and languages have value, and help students think about how to use different dialects and languages for different audiences.
- Read texts that represent diverse cultures and languages to help students activate, share, and build on their cultural and experiential knowledge.

Key Practice 2: Provide Rich Oral Language Experiences

Oral language is incredibly important for literacy development. Throughout the PreK–12 years, students need multiple and repeated opportunities to speak and listen in order to build the kinds of language resources that will support their reading and writing.^{17,18} Oral language development begins from learners' youngest days with families and caregivers and extends through grade 12 and beyond. Oral language includes knowledge of sounds, word meanings, sentence structures, and how to communicate in different settings. It is the foundation on which all literacy development rests. In line with Key Practice 1, providing rich oral language experiences also means welcoming and encouraging all ways of using language and different languages. Students should be encouraged to draw on their existing language resources as they add new language resources for specific purposes and audiences.

Actions for Implementation for Providing Rich Oral Language Experiences

- Facilitate well-structured, interactive read-alouds to create many opportunities for students to listen to and practice using new vocabulary and syntax structures.
- Plan effective discussions with clear discussion norms agreed upon by students, a reliance on complex and engaging texts, compelling questions, and a variety of formats.
- Academically Productive Talk is an excellent framework for effective discussions, with clear guiding principles and helpful “talk moves” for students.¹⁹

Key Practice 3: Explicitly Teach Prerequisite Foundational Skills for Engaging with Print

Introduction to Foundational Skills: In literacy, foundational skills refer to the skills needed to read words and connected text fluently. They are foundational in that other, more advanced literacy skills rely on them. Having a solid set of foundational skills in early elementary school is critical. At the same time, foundational skills continue to develop as students encounter increasingly complex text as they progress through the grades. The instructional targets for developing foundational skills are as follows:

- Phonological Awareness
- Print Awareness
- Word Reading and Spelling
- Fluency

Phonological Awareness: Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize, manipulate, and differentiate between the segments of sound in spoken language. The smallest segments of sound are individual sounds found in words, called phonemes. Phonological awareness also includes awareness of larger segments of sound, such as syllables. For example, the spoken word *cat* has three individual sounds (/c/ /a/ /t/) and one syllable. Phonological awareness is essential for developing an understanding of the alphabetic principle, the system of mapping spoken sounds to written letters.²⁰ In order to map spoken sounds to written letters, children first need to be able to identify individual sounds in words. Phonological awareness is the precursor to decoding (reading) and encoding (writing) words.

A key consideration for phonological awareness with multilingual and multidialectal learners is to recognize that students will draw on their existing language resources for pronouncing words. When students draw on languages other than English or on specific dialects of English (e.g., African American Vernacular English) to pronounce words in

ways that do not align with the type of English commonly used in schools, they are not making *mistakes*. Instead, students are fusing the language knowledge they have with the type of English they are asked to use in school. Helping students hear and use different pronunciations of words, based on audience and purpose, can boost their phonological awareness while honoring their existing language resources.

Actions for Implementation for Teaching Phonological Awareness

- All practices to support phonological awareness are most effective when students are *seeing* the written form of the word as they practice manipulating sounds.
- Teach students that spoken language can be broken down into smaller segments of sound. Begin by teaching students to recognize larger segments, such as whole words within sentences, and then smaller segments such as syllables, morphemes, and phonemes within a word.^{21,22}
- By kindergarten, many students will be ready to isolate, blend, delete, and replace phonemes in words. Begin with one-syllable words that have two to three phonemes. Invite students to substitute beginning, middle, and ending phonemes to create new words.

Print Awareness: Print awareness is the knowledge that print represents language and carries meaning.²³ Print awareness also describes student understanding of conventions of print, which include the orientation and directionality of print (e.g., in English, sentences are read left to right, pages are read top to bottom). Other characteristics of print awareness include awareness of the purposes of print (e.g., to inform, entertain, persuade) and the ability to differentiate between letters and whole words. Print awareness is an important building block in the foundation for word reading and writing.²⁴ When children have a foundational understanding of how print works, they are more prepared to develop an understanding of the alphabetic principle. As students develop advanced print concepts—usually by Pre-K—they may be able to identify specific letters and engage in writing letters.²⁵

With respect to Nevada’s diverse student population, there is a great variety of writing systems about which Nevada’s students have knowledge, and some of those writing systems operate differently from English. The writing systems of English and many other languages are alphabetic, with letters and groups of letters each representing one sound, whereas some writing systems have individual symbols that represent whole syllables (e.g., Korean) or entire words (e.g., Mandarin). Additionally, some writing systems are read from right to left (e.g., Arabic). Multilingual students’ knowledge of different writing systems should be honored in classrooms, and they should have opportunities to compare and contrast the writing systems they know with their developing knowledge of English.

Actions for Implementation for Teaching Print Awareness

- Draw students’ attention to print in text through “print referencing.”²⁶ Print referencing refers to the act of drawing children’s attention to print concepts and explicitly discussing features of print concepts. Read-alouds, classroom routines, and play are excellent opportunities to engage students in print referencing.²⁷
- Support students in recognizing environmental print and symbols.
- Regularly identify book parts and features, such as the front, back, title, and author.

Word Reading and Spelling: Word reading is essential for proficient decoding and, ultimately, comprehension. The foundation of word reading is built on students’ understanding of the alphabetic principle. Knowledge of spelling supports knowledge of word reading. Word reading and spelling involve strategically and flexibly applying knowledge of letter-sound relationships, spelling patterns, and morphology to read and spell words accurately and efficiently.

In the written English language, sounds—also called phonemes—are represented by letters or letter combinations, also called graphemes. Graphemes are also commonly referred to as spelling patterns. Some phonemes may have several graphemes. For example, the phoneme /ā/ (long *a* vowel sound) may be spelled with the following graphemes: a_e, ai, ay, ea, eigh, ei, ey. Phonics instruction refers to teaching approaches in which students are taught to apply their knowledge of the alphabetic principle to decode words.²⁸

Systematic, explicit phonics instruction has more evidence than any other approach for teaching students in PreK–2 to learn how to read words.²⁹ In explicit and systematic phonics instruction, students are explicitly taught letter-sound relationships in a systematic and sequential way across the early grades. For example, less complex letter-sound relationships are taught first. These include phonemes represented by single letters (e.g., /s/, /m/, /b/, /r/). Students then learn more complex letter-sound relationships, such as consonant blends (e.g., br, sm, pr) and digraphs (e.g., sh, ch, th) and short and long vowel spellings, including vowel teams (e.g., ay, ai, oi, ea).

Spelling words has a reciprocal relationship with reading words. When phonics intervention includes practice in spelling words, students make greater gains in both reading and spelling words.³⁰ Importantly, spelling practice should be based on the letter-sound patterns being targeted in instruction rather than a list of random challenging words so that students have opportunities to both decode (read) and encode (spell) while they are learning new letter-sound patterns. Traditional spelling instruction often involves a focus on simply testing lists of spelling words rather than explicit instruction in spelling patterns and how spelling works. Following this instruction, spelling should be assessed through a diagnostic analysis of students' spelling errors to provide a clear direction for instruction.³¹

Studying a small number of sight words has a place alongside phonics instruction.³² Traditional sight word instruction relies on the use of a flash card approach without regard to students' development, resulting in missed opportunities for learning. Instead, effective instruction first considers whether students have a concept of word in text or the ability to match spoken words to printed words.^{33,34} Additionally, sight word acquisition is likely to be most productive when students have basic letter knowledge.³⁵

Importantly, multisyllabic words often have less predictable letter-sound relationships and vowel pronunciations, which can present a challenge to developing readers.³⁶ Teaching knowledge of spelling patterns, especially vowel spelling patterns, and flexible word reading strategies can help readers break down multisyllabic words into smaller parts.³⁷ In addition, morphology knowledge—knowledge and awareness of how words are constructed with morphemes (i.e., meaningful word parts like roots and affixes)—helps readers recognize meaningful word parts, break words into smaller parts, and infer the meaning of words.

Actions for Implementation for Teaching Word Reading and Spelling

- Teach each letter of the alphabet, uppercase and lowercase, and their corresponding sounds. Progress from simple to more complex letter-sound relationships, working with just a few at a time. Begin with consonant and short vowel sounds represented by a single letter before introducing consonant blends, digraphs, long vowel sounds, and vowel teams. Teach readers to blend, chunk, and sound out sound-spelling patterns.³⁸
- Teach one to two letters a week for a few weeks and then build in a practice week of reviewing those letters/sounds together.
- Decodable texts can be used to help readers in early elementary school practice recently learned sound-spelling patterns and morphemes.

Additional Considerations for Secondary Settings

Adolescents often need help reading multisyllabic words. Continue to use the routines shared here with discipline-specific words as part of Tier 1 instruction in middle and even high school. Help students recognize and pronounce longer words to help them build confidence and competence with reading the challenging academic vocabulary of the disciplines.

- Provide explicit instruction in developmentally appropriate spelling patterns, and give students multiple opportunities to practice encoding (spelling) the letter-sound patterns they are learning.
- Teach readers to break multisyllabic words into smaller parts and to read these smaller parts using flexible decoding strategies.
- Teach students affixes that they will commonly encounter, such as the prefixes *pre-*, *mis-*, and *dis-* and the suffixes *-er*, *-est*, *-ed*, and *-ing*. Then have them practice with these morphemes by manipulating them to create new words.
- Across all grade levels, students should be given opportunities to practice reading and spelling words with recently learned sound-spelling patterns and morphemes.

Fluency: Fluency is the ability to read with accuracy, speed, and appropriate expression.³⁹ Within the concept of fluency, accuracy refers to the ability to decode words accurately. Speed refers to the rate at which readers decode words. Appropriate expression refers to the ability to read words with intonation and phrasing that reflect the meaning of what is being read. These three components of fluency—accuracy, speed, and appropriate expression—contribute to automaticity with reading, which is the ability to read words, sentences, and paragraphs accurately with speed and ease.⁴⁰

When readers can read fluently, they spend less time and energy on decoding individual words, which allows them to focus on the meaning of the text. To develop fluency, readers need well-developed word reading skills. However, fluency can be taught and practiced as soon as readers can identify a few words. Students' fluency may vary from text to text, depending on the content, vocabulary, and sentence structure of each text. To support their fluency, students should be given opportunities to read a wide range of texts with varying difficulty levels, topics, and writing styles.^{41,42}

Actions for Implementation for Teaching Fluency

- Provide opportunities for students to read orally and repeatedly. Begin with more accessible texts with familiar words and simple sentence structures before moving to more challenging texts. Model how to read with phrasing and expression,⁴³ and explicitly teach students the purpose of punctuation marks.
- Use reader's theater, a learning routine in which students theatrically read or perform a scripted narrative and practice vocal expression, to align fluency support with discipline-specific texts and content.⁴⁴
- Choral reading can help eliminate some of the anxiety that students may feel over reading aloud in class while still providing opportunities for them to engage in oral reading.
- Use repeated reading and paired reading routines that help students read the same text multiple times for different purposes.

Additional Considerations for Secondary Settings

Fluency continues to develop throughout middle and high school and is particularly important for the complex academic texts students encounter. Using the strategies shared here, continue helping students develop into accurate and prosodic readers. This will support their comprehension of academic language.

Key Practice 4: Scaffold the Reading Comprehension of Complex Texts Across Formats, Genres, and Disciplines

Introduction to Reading Comprehension: Reading comprehension is the process by which readers make meaning from the text they are reading.⁴⁵ Comprehension is a complex process that relies on the reader’s word reading skills, fluency, and vocabulary knowledge.⁴⁶ However, comprehension also depends on other factors, such as knowledge about the topic or content of the text, the characteristics of the text (e.g., syntax, text structure), and the purpose for reading or the associated reading task (e.g., reading for pleasure, reading to gather information). Finally, digital and multimodal texts, which are ubiquitous in classrooms, colleges, and careers, have unique features that are an important part of the reading comprehension equation. To navigate digital texts, students need to build skill sets that enable them to evaluate the quality of information and synthesize information across multiple modalities (e.g., print, images, video, diagrams, figures). The essential instructional targets for supporting reading comprehension are as follows:

- Vocabulary and Morphology
- Knowledge
- Syntax and Text Structure
- Reading Comprehension Strategies

Additional Considerations for Secondary Settings

These instructional targets for comprehension require significant attention at all grade levels. The instructional approaches below are essential from PreK–12th grade. In particular, adolescents encounter increasingly complex texts in every content area. They continue to need the reading comprehension scaffolds outlined below as part of Tier 1 instruction in every content area.

Help students recognize that experts in the academic disciplines use language in different ways. Draw attention to the different ways of expressing ideas in math, social studies, science, English Language Arts, and other subjects, and help students understand why, for example, mathematicians use very precise language while primary source documents in social studies use the language of the period in which they were written. These different ways of using language relate to all the components of reading comprehension. The texts of different disciplines use different types of words and roots, they require different kinds of knowledge, and they use different types of text structures. Adolescents need explicit support with these features of texts in the disciplines.

Vocabulary: Vocabulary is knowledge of words and word meanings; in many ways, it is a proxy for knowledge itself. Vocabulary is first learned through oral language, and students come to school with well-developed vocabulary knowledge, often in multiple languages.⁴⁷ When students have developed word reading skills, vocabulary can also be learned from reading.

Vocabulary words are often conceptualized in three tiers.⁴⁸ Tier 1 words are commonly used in oral language. Tier 2 words may be general academic words in nature, meaning they are commonly found and used in school settings, especially in texts and writing. Tier 3 words are domain specific, meaning they are found and used in specific settings and situations, including social, cultural, and academic domains.⁴⁹

Vocabulary can also be conceptualized as receptive versus productive: Receptive vocabulary refers to the vocabulary that the student recognizes and understands through listening and reading, whereas productive vocabulary refers to the vocabulary that the student can use accurately in speaking and writing.⁵⁰

Vocabulary knowledge is essential for reading comprehension and proficient writing.⁵¹ In order to read proficiently, beginning readers must be able to recognize decoded words from their own vocabulary, learned through oral language.

All students, including and especially multilingual learners, need explicit instruction in word meaning.⁵² As part of this explicit instruction, students need student-friendly definitions, multiple encounters with words, examples and nonexamples of words, and multiple opportunities to use words. All students also benefit from strategies for independent word learning through using dictionary tools and context clues and recognizing meaningful roots and affixes within words. Multilingual learners should be encouraged to consider cognates, words that sound and are spelled similarly in two different languages. All students should be provided with opportunities to read widely—a variety of texts at a variety of instructional levels—to develop their vocabulary knowledge.

As students progress through the elementary and secondary grades, they will encounter increasingly unfamiliar academic and discipline-specific vocabulary in both texts and content learning. Discipline-specific vocabulary, words like *isosceles*, *electromagnetic*, and *institution*, are the building blocks of meaning in the academic disciplines. Students need explicit support with key terms that will support their reading and learning in the various content areas.⁵³

Actions for Implementation for Teaching Vocabulary

- Introduce new vocabulary through oral language activities, especially through read-alouds.
- For key terms that students will need deep knowledge of, provide ten or more meaningful exposures and opportunities to practice using those words.
- Help students personalize word meanings by helping them connect words to other languages they speak and their personal experiences.
- As students read increasingly complex and discipline-specific texts, they will encounter more unfamiliar vocabulary. To support students' comprehension, explicitly teach a few words from the text that students will need to know. Provide opportunities for students to deeply engage with the meaning of these words through exploring the full range of their meanings (including synonyms and antonyms), examples and nonexamples, contexts in which they are used, and related words and ideas.
- Provide both oral and written opportunities for students to practice with new words.

Morphology: In addition to explicit instruction in word meanings, students need explicit instruction in morphemes, or meaningful word parts (e.g., roots, affixes).⁵⁴ Morphemes are the smallest units of language that have meaning—they are also referred to as base words, affixes (prefixes and suffixes), and roots. The word *spell* has one morpheme: the base word *spell*. The word *rewrite* has two morphemes: *re-*, a prefix meaning *again*, and *write*, a base word. The word *construction* has three morphemes: the prefix *con-*, the root *struct*, and the suffix *-ion*. Words with more than one morpheme are called *morphologically complex*.

Morphology knowledge is especially important because an estimated 60% to 75% of words in the English language are made up of Greek and Latin roots and affixes.⁵⁵ Many of these morphologically complex words are discipline specific, such as science and social studies, and morphology knowledge is essential for reading these morphologically complex words. It is also essential for overall reading comprehension.⁵⁶ Multilingual learners may have a unique edge when it comes to morphology, as many morphemes that appear in academic words in English derived from the Romance languages, which derived from Latin.

Actions for Implementation for Teaching Morphology

- From readings and other instructional materials, identify morphemes (roots and affixes) that students are likely to see in other words. Explicitly teach the meanings of morphemes and how they contribute to the meanings of words.
- Create a morpheme *bank* for students to refer to as they learn new meaningful word parts.
- Ask students to hunt for morphemes in their readings and to use their morphological knowledge to figure out what new words mean.
- Encourage multilingual learners to make cross-linguistic connections between morphemes in English and similarities in their home languages.

Knowledge: To support students in constructing meaning while they read, both *activating* and *building* background knowledge are essential. Students bring a great deal of cultural, linguistic, and experiential knowledge to texts that can help them make meaning while they read.⁵⁷ At the same time, many texts require that students have explicit opportunities to build topic-related knowledge to support comprehension of complex and unfamiliar topics.⁵⁸ Even very young students benefit, with lasting positive impacts, from learning opportunities that integrate literacy instruction with knowledge building in the content areas.⁵⁹ For example, when students are developing literacy skills with texts that also build knowledge in areas like science and social studies, they have opportunities to build schemas for topics and concepts that will support their future reading. For older students, one of the key recommendations for supporting comprehension is to “build students’ world and word knowledge so they can make sense of the text.”⁶⁰

Actions for Implementation for Activating and Building Background Knowledge

- To **activate** existing knowledge to support comprehension:
 - » Ask open-ended questions related to the topic of the reading.
 - » Use graphic organizers like KWL (Know–Want to Know–Learned) charts.
 - » Ask students to create visual representations of what they know about a topic.
 - » Pose text-embedded questions that students answer as they read to make connections between what is in the text and what they already know.

- To **build** new knowledge about words and the world to support comprehension:
 - » Select key or essential words from a reading that students will need to understand to comprehend the text, and provide opportunities for students to learn and use those words.
 - » Share brief videos, multimodal texts, and explicit explanations of information related to a text to help students begin to establish a knowledge base and schemas they can draw from while they read.
 - » Use motivating and accessible texts to help students build the word and world knowledge that they will need to comprehend a challenging text.
 - » Support students in developing digital literacy skills, including finding and evaluating information online as well as synthesizing information from multiple sources and multiple modalities.

Syntax and Text Structure: Syntax and text structure both relate to the language structures students will see in their reading and will also need to use in their writing. Syntax relates to sentence structure, specifically, the order of words in sentences. Text structure relates to the structure of paragraphs and whole texts; it lets the reader know if a text is going to be explaining something, comparing and contrasting things, or showing a cause-and-effect relationship. The syntax of long sentences that have multiple clauses and phrases can pose significant challenges to developing readers. And if readers are not able to identify the structure of an overall text, they can miss the purpose of the text as well as how key ideas relate to each other. Research shows the importance of both of these language structures: syntactic knowledge correlates with reading comprehension,⁶¹ and explicit teaching of text structure has been shown to improve reading comprehension.⁶² Teaching syntax and text structure with authentic texts and students' own writing is a better use of instructional time than isolated exercises that do not relate to what students are reading and writing in their classrooms.

Actions for Implementation for Teaching Syntax and Text Structure

- Teach syntax and text structure with examples from authentic texts and students' own writing rather than with isolated exercises.
- To support students' syntactic knowledge, or knowledge of sentence structure:
 - » Help students build sentences from groups of words that are out of order.
 - » Teach students to expand sentences by adding important information about their subjects and actions.
 - » Help students use connectives (e.g., transition words, signal words) to connect ideas within sentences.
- To support students' knowledge of text structure:
 - » Through the use of models and explicit instruction, help students understand the common text structures they will encounter, including description, sequence, cause and effect, compare and contrast, and problem and solution.
 - » Share the specific connective words and terms that are clues to the type of text structure. For example, *because* and *as a result* are common connective words for cause-and-effect text structure, and *first*, *following*, and *finally* are common connectives for a sequence text structure.
 - » Help students verbalize the purpose of a text, as related to its text structure. For example, model statements like *In X text, the author's purpose was to compare and contrast two different approaches to dealing with ocean pollution.*
 - » Provide cognitive modeling on identifying text structure. In other words, share a reading with students and model how a reader pays attention to the text features that give clues to the text structure, as well as how to identify the important information in the text based on the text structure.

Reading Comprehension Strategies: Proficient readers use their reading skills and knowledge strategically and flexibly to comprehend a wide variety of texts and navigate diverse reading demands. In particular, proficient readers use reading comprehension strategies to make sense of and understand what they are reading. Comprehension strategies—cognitive processes that readers employ to self-regulate their comprehension—are active.⁶³ Comprehension strategies include activating prior knowledge and predicting, questioning, making inferences, monitoring, summarizing, and finding the main idea of the text.⁶⁴ In addition, reading demands change as students are asked to read more informational texts and discipline-specific texts, and students need explicit guidance with reading in the disciplines.⁶⁵

Actions for Implementation for Teaching Reading Comprehension Strategies

- Practice all comprehension strategies in the context of authentic, worthwhile texts, rather than in isolation.
- Model how readers monitor their comprehension, noting that when they do not understand something, they may need to revisit words or sentences to clarify their understanding.
- Teach students to pose questions while they read, such as *How does this idea connect to what I read earlier?* and *Why did the author share this detail [use this word, etc.]?*
- Making inferences, also described as *reading between the lines* or attending to what an author might be suggesting without stating it outright, is a central comprehension process. Modeling how to make inferences and asking students pointed questions about what an author might be implying with specific phrases, sentences, and paragraphs help students learn to make inferences.
- Support students in finding and expressing a *gist statement* about a passage, which is a research-based strategy for identifying main ideas within texts.

Key Practice 5: Model and Guide the Expression of Written Ideas for a Variety of Audiences

Introduction to Writing: Writing is essential for communicating for a variety of purposes and audiences, in all aspects of life. Writing consists of the integration of many literacy skills to communicate for a variety of purposes and audiences. The ability to write proficiently gives students the tools they need to communicate and express themselves effectively in school, as well as in a myriad of contexts outside school.⁶⁶ Writing has also been shown to enhance student learning across all grades. When students write about content—including social studies, science, and math content—their learning of that content improves.⁶⁷ In addition, writing and reading have a reciprocal relationship, meaning that proficiency in one improves proficiency in the other.⁶⁸

The literacy skills necessary for proficient writing include transcription (spelling and handwriting), composition (syntax and crafting ideas), and self-regulation (goal-setting, attention, and reviewing).⁶⁹ As children gain print awareness, they begin to engage in the earliest stages of writing—drawing, scribbling, and approximating letters.⁷⁰ As students develop early phonics skills, their writing may focus on encoding—determining the spelling of a word based on the sounds in the word. As students develop proficiency in foundational writing skills such as spelling, handwriting, typing, and sentence construction, they become more fluent writers and can engage more deeply in the other components of writing. Explicit instruction in foundational writing skills, the writing process (including writing strategies to support students through the writing process), and writing to summarize content have all been shown to be effective in improving student writing. The main instructional targets for writing include the following:

- Handwriting, Typing, and Spelling

- Crafting Sentences, Paragraphs, and Texts for Different Purposes and Audiences
- Self-Regulation: Goal Setting, Attention, and Reviewing

Handwriting, Typing, and Spelling: Handwriting, typing, and spelling are the key mechanical components of writing. Students need explicit support in each of these areas in order to become fluent writers who can craft ideas for different purposes and audiences. Children can engage in composing, spelling, and handwriting even before they are proficient decoders or encoders.

Actions for Implementation for Teaching Handwriting, Typing, and Spelling

- For young children, celebrate their scribbles and beginning encoding as they begin to approximate letters, and explicitly teach children how to hold pencils and make the shape of letters to develop their handwriting.
- Encourage children to compose through dictation (where an adult writes) or through drawing.
- Around second grade, support students in proofreading their own work and in learning how to type.

Crafting Sentences, Paragraphs, and Texts for Different Purposes and Audiences: To compose ideas, putting them into a coherent and cohesive message on the page, students need to draw on multiple skills and sets of knowledge. Much of what students learn as part of reading development directly supports their writing development, and vice versa. To write effectively with a specific purpose and for a specific audience, students need to use their knowledge of syntax to craft sentences, their knowledge of text structure to write paragraphs, and their knowledge of purpose and audience to write full texts.⁷¹ Writing for discipline-specific purposes and audiences is an important area of development for secondary students. Understanding the specific ways scientists, mathematicians, historians, and other professionals communicate with each other can help students meaningfully engage in those fields, and this supports students' college and career readiness.

Actions for Implementation for Crafting Ideas for Different Purposes and Audiences

- All students across all grades should be explicitly taught to write for a variety of purposes and audiences, including for narrative, informative, and persuasive purposes.
- In secondary settings, students need explicit instruction in how to write across the content areas for discipline-specific purposes and audiences and in discipline-specific genres of writing.⁷²

Self-Regulation: Goal Setting, Attention, and Reviewing: Writing is ultimately a process, one that requires a goal, a plan, and self-monitoring. To set goals, to attend to those goals while writing, and to actively review one's own writing are essential skills for writers to develop. Self-regulation allows for writers to manage the steps of the writing process effectively. Students need explicit support with identifying purposes for writing and with engaging in the writing process.

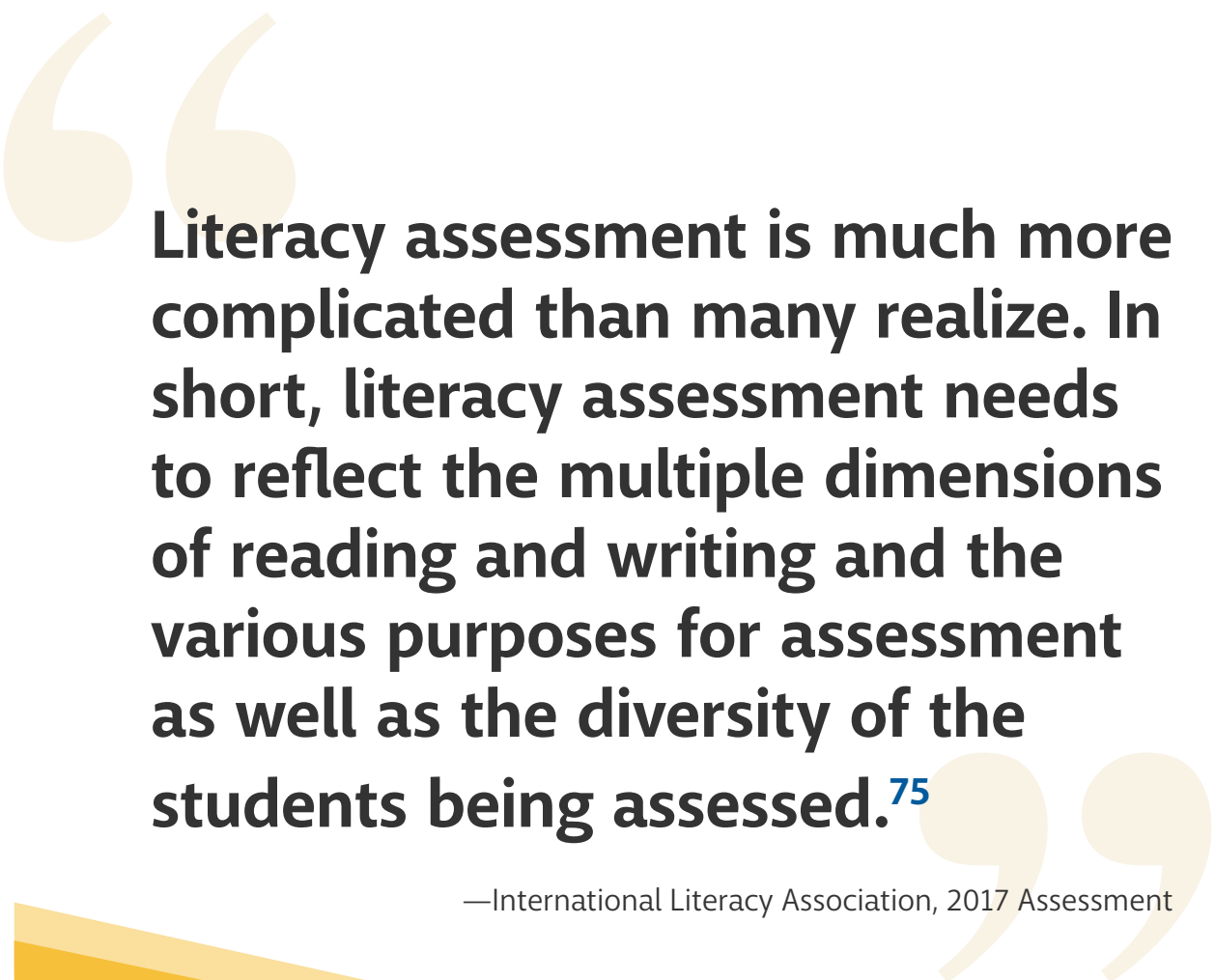
Actions for Implementation for Teaching Self-Regulation

- Teach students to use the writing process and related writing strategies and scaffolds. Scaffolds can support all students (including multilingual learners and students with disabilities) to use writing strategies flexibly and independently.
- Students should have ample opportunities to write and continuously build their ability to write more complex text.⁷³
- Students should be engaged in inquiry and research, prewriting strategies, outlining, peer revision, editing, and goal setting for their writing.

- Provide collaborative writing opportunities, model texts, and daily writing time, which are also components of effective writing instruction.
- Encourage multilingual learners to draw on their full repertoire of linguistic knowledge, within and across languages they know, to support their engagement in and success with writing.⁷⁴

Additional Considerations for Secondary Settings

Adolescents write about increasingly sophisticated ideas for a broader variety of audiences as they progress through school. The scaffolds identified here are critically needed as part of Tier 1 instruction in every discipline to help students develop as strong writers. For example, math writing requires different language knowledge and different content knowledge than English Language Arts writing. Adolescents need explicit instruction in how writing for a mathematician requires a different set of language features (e.g., words, sentence structure, overall text structure and tone) than writing in a literary context. Even when students come to secondary contexts with strong foundational skills in writing, and especially when they do not, they need explicit direction in how planning for and executing writing requires attention to the context of the discipline and the audience for the writing task.



Literacy assessment is much more complicated than many realize. In short, literacy assessment needs to reflect the multiple dimensions of reading and writing and the various purposes for assessment as well as the diversity of the students being assessed.⁷⁵

—International Literacy Association, 2017 Assessment

Assessment

Assessment

This section outlines different types of literacy assessments and how they can be used to support student learning needs, identify students who need additional support, and monitor the effectiveness of literacy initiatives statewide. Assessments are how the data are produced that enable educators to make instructional decisions so that all students have equitable access to the high-quality literacy instruction and support that they need.

The International Literacy Association defines literacy assessments in two categories, summative and ongoing.⁷⁶

1. **Summative assessments include state tests and end-of-course/subject exams designed to measure achievement at the end of an instructional sequence or time frame. The results of summative assessments are used by many stakeholders, including parents, school and district administrators, and state and national policy-makers, to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning over a designated course of instruction.**
2. **Ongoing assessments include formative and interim assessments used for screening, progress monitoring, and evaluation of student needs. These types of ongoing assessments are used by teachers, students, and school administrators throughout the school year to inform everyday teaching and learning.**

Literacy assessment is more than a collection of technical assessment tools. In an effective assessment system, assessments are selected for specific purposes and are aligned to appropriate learning targets. In addition, as assessments are selected and used, the potential positive and negative consequences of assessment results should always be considered.⁷⁷

Literacy assessment is an integral part of literacy teaching and learning; it contributes to the conditions for learning for students⁷⁸ and the overall assessment culture in a district or school.⁷⁹ Nevada's assessment approach aligns with the aims of competency-based learning, which is for assessment to be "a meaningful, positive, and empowering learning experience for students that yields timely, relevant, and actionable evidence."⁸⁰ To align with these goals, literacy assessment should be used to identify literacy strengths and areas of need at various grade levels in developmentally appropriate ways.

These assessments provide data-driven insights for educators to guide their instructional decision making and intervention planning. Well-designed and well-facilitated assessments also allow for districts to monitor progress toward state literacy goals and standards. Finally, effective assessments can ensure accountability and transparency in literacy education outcomes across the state.

Literacy Assessment in Secondary School

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA),⁸¹ every secondary student is required to have completed a literacy assessment at least once in high school. In secondary schools, the data from these assessments can be used to identify students who may need more literacy instruction.

As with elementary students, secondary students who are identified for additional support should then be assessed using diagnostic assessments. For this to happen, the diagnostic assessment tools, staff trained to administer the assessments, and time to administer the assessments and review the results need to be embedded into the school year. This may require the school to think differently about how they structure time and assign staff.

Key Practices of Literacy Assessment

1. Align Literacy Assessments with Specific Goals
2. Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Assessment Practices
3. Build Capacity in Assessment Literacy

Key Practice 1: Align Literacy Assessments with Specific Goals

Different types of assessments have different purposes. Aligning the use of specific assessments with specific goals, such as screening, progress monitoring, and outcome evaluation, is critical for instructional practice and for using time and resources effectively.⁸²

Screening and Diagnostic Needs

Universal Screeners

Screening assessments are used to quickly identify if someone needs intervention or support. Universal screeners are administered to all students in a classroom or grade level. They are essential tools designed to assess students' reading abilities and identify those at risk for reading difficulties. These standardized evaluations focus on literacy skills such as phonemic awareness, letter knowledge, word recognition, and reading comprehension.⁸³ For educators, universal screeners are invaluable because they enable early detection of reading challenges, allowing for prompt intervention to meet the specific needs of each student.⁸⁴ By identifying readers with areas of difficulty early, these screeners help prevent long-term academic difficulties, support differentiated instruction, and ensure that all students build the strong foundational reading skills necessary for their overall academic success.⁸⁵

Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic assessments are typically conducted subsequent to screening assessments, particularly for students who do not meet benchmarks. Diagnostic assessment is an indispensable aspect of the assessment process, crucial for pinpointing students' strengths and weaknesses in specific reading skills.^{86,87} Identifying skill gaps accurately guides the determination of appropriate instructional strategies and interventions.

Monitoring Student Growth

Formative Assessment

Progress monitoring is a necessary part of any assessment system. Formative assessments are used throughout the learning process to assess student knowledge of class learning outcomes and to make next-step instructional decisions. Formative assessments tend to be informal and tightly aligned to Tier 1 classroom learning outcomes. Examples include exit tickets, teacher observation, class quizzes, project-based learning, and student portfolios and presentations. Formative assessments are also used to provide students with relevant and immediate feedback. The use of formative assessments can significantly enhance student learning outcomes.^{88,89}

Progress Monitoring Assessments

Progress monitoring assessments are a series of frequent, short-form assessments that evaluate student learning to provide feedback to both the student and the teacher. These assessments are typically focused on a specific skill being taught in a Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention and are part of an intervention plan that determines a specific, ambitious goal (which is based on the rate of improvement) and states the frequency of data collection and analysis. After approximately six weeks of collecting data through these assessments, the teacher can analyze the data to determine if the intervention should be continued or if there needs to be a change to the type of instruction and intervention. They may go deeper into the error analysis data to see specifically which supports or clarifications the student requires. Collaborating with a team of colleagues is beneficial in helping the teacher make these decisions.

Summative Assessments

Assessments that evaluate the outcomes of learning after instruction has taken place can also be referred to as summative assessments and serve as crucial benchmarks for evaluating students' literacy proficiency and informing instructional practices. These assessments provide a comprehensive measure of student learning, gauging the effectiveness of literacy instruction and intervention programs.

Summative assessments aim to:

- evaluate student proficiency in literacy at the end of an instructional period,
- identify trends and gaps in literacy achievement across diverse student populations,
- inform statewide educational policies and resource allocation, and
- guide professional development and instructional improvement efforts.

Some research highlights that well-designed summative assessments provide valid and reliable measures of student learning, critical for ensuring accurate evaluations of literacy proficiency.⁹⁰ Summative assessments can also lead to significant improvements in teaching and learning when effectively utilized by teachers. The data can provide clear and actionable reports to educators, administrators, and policymakers that are disaggregated by student demographics, including socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, and English language proficiency. Such disaggregation can highlight achievement gaps and ensure that all groups of students are receiving targeted

support to meet their needs. Summative assessments are a pivotal component of the Nevada State Literacy Plan, providing essential insights into student achievement and guiding continuous improvement in literacy instruction. By leveraging research-based practices and ensuring equitable access, these assessments contribute to the overarching goal of fostering high literacy standards for all students. Table 1 provides a summary of the different types of assessments and their purposes. The examples are a selection of assessments currently used in Nevada. Beyond state-mandated assessments, local education agencies may select additional assessments as needed, to align with their instruction and interventions.

Table 1. Different Types of Assessments and Their Purposes

	Universal Screeners	Diagnostic Assessments	Progress Monitoring	Summative Assessments
Why	Which students are at risk? Which systems are at risk?	Which skills does this student have? Which skills need to be taught?	Is the instruction working? Does the course need to be changed?	Have students learned what they need to know? Did the instruction work?
What	Brief, standardized assessments of key literacy skills	In-depth, often non-standardized assessments	Very brief (1 to 3 minutes) assessments	Outcome evaluations of standards mastery
Who	All students	Students at risk	Students at risk in the 40th percentile and under on MAP	All students in grades 3–8
When	Beginning, middle, and end of year	When problem-solving for differentiated instruction or intervention	Weekly or biweekly to allow for quick adjustments based on response to instruction	After units of study or at the end of a school year
Analogy to Medicine	Periodic vitals check like blood pressure or cholesterol – Is there a problem?	Blood test or diagnostic imaging – What is the problem? What needs to be done about it?	Follow-up checks – Is our course of action working? Will intervention get there on time? If it's working, keep going. If it's not working, change course of action.	Annual Wellness Exam – Are students fit and healthy? How can they stay healthy?

Actions for Implementation

- Ensure that screening and diagnostic assessments are available that are appropriate for both elementary and secondary students.
- Review assessments and ensure they are being used for the appropriate purposes (screening, progress monitoring, or outcome evaluation).
- Identify and use diagnostic assessments to determine academic interventions.
- Provide frequent actionable feedback to students using their assessment results.

Key Practice 2: Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Assessment Practices

To be inclusive and equitable, assessments should be designed to demonstrate student learning,⁹¹ aligned to rigorous common expectations for learning, and be accessible for all students regardless of their particular learning needs.⁹² The social, cultural, and linguistic background of students, as well as any disabilities, should be considered when assessments are selected.⁹³ Assessments should have an explicit purpose, with results that enable teachers to make decisions about their instruction and students to make decisions about their own learning. In addition, assessments should be selected and designed to support a continuous improvement process. Further, students should have a variety of ways to demonstrate their understanding beyond a single assessment. It is important to use multiple types of assessment, including teacher observation. Opportunities should also be provided for students to demonstrate their competency creatively, providing them with a sense of efficacy. Assessments can have a strong impact on both teacher morale and student motivation; therefore, they should not be used as punitive measures, only as instructional tools.⁹⁴

Literacy assessment materials should be free of bias and stereotypes and, where possible, should reflect the cultural diversity of the students. Assessment questions should be clear, unambiguous, and free of cultural references unless explicitly in the text.

And finally, transparency is essential with equitable assessment practices. What is being assessed and the results should be shared with students and their families. The results should provide feedback that helps students improve their understanding and clarify misconceptions about the content being assessed, allowing parents to fully understand their child's progress.⁹⁵

Accommodations

Accommodations align with legal requirements for legally protected groups of students. They primarily apply to summative assessment tools that are normally rigid in their standard implementation. Accommodations reflect best practices in inclusive education, providing equitable testing conditions for students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and other students with diverse needs. The primary objectives of accommodations and accessibility in summative assessments are to remove barriers that might prevent students from demonstrating their true literacy abilities.⁹⁶

It is important to identify students requiring accommodations in collaboration with special education professionals, English language learner coordinators, and classroom teachers who utilize individualized education programs and 504 plans to determine specific accommodations for students with disabilities. Compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates the provision of accommodations, ensuring that students with disabilities receive fair testing conditions.⁹⁷

Accommodations provided should never modify or alter the assessment in any manner; however, they should instead enable equitable access for students given their needs. Some examples of summative assessment accommodations include the following:

- Presentation accommodations – Provide assessments in various formats (e.g., large print, braille, audio) to meet diverse sensory needs.
- Response accommodations – Allow students to respond in different ways (e.g., verbal responses, use of assistive technology, scribe support) to facilitate accurate demonstration of knowledge.
- Timing and scheduling accommodations – Extend time limits, offer frequent breaks, or schedule assessments at optimal times of the day for individual students.
- Setting accommodations – Administer assessments in alternative settings (e.g., small group, one-on-one, quiet room) to minimize distractions and reduce anxiety.
- Accessibility – Provide tools such as text-to-speech, magnification, and adjustable screen colors in digital assessments.

Providing accommodations in summative assessments is integral to ensuring that the data provided are valid and reliable. By implementing well-researched and carefully designed strategies, all students, regardless of their individual needs, can have the opportunity to succeed and demonstrate their literacy proficiency. This commitment to equity and inclusivity will help us achieve the goal of high literacy standards for every student.

Actions for Implementation

- Ensure that assessments are accessible for all students, including instructions available in their home language and/or extra time for completion.
- Ensure that appropriate accommodations are provided for students, such as assistive technology or different ways to respond.

Key Practice 3: Build Capacity in Assessment Literacy

Achievement, the main goal of education, is measured through assessment. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers have strong assessment literacy. This is the knowledge that educators possess to design, implement, interpret, and use assessments effectively. Based on research using Conservation of Resources Theory (COR), there is a positive relationship between teachers' assessment literacy and their teaching efficacy.⁹⁸

Professional development should focus on the fact that assessment is not just something that is done for compliance. It is an important tool in instructional decision making.⁹⁹ Ongoing professional development should encompass the following topics to build teachers' assessment literacy:

- the types and purposes of different assessments and when to administer them
- how to design and use formative assessments, interpret scores, and identify next steps
- how to access and use online reports from assessment platforms
- how to understand assessment terminology (e.g., percentage vs. percentile, scaled score, standard deviation, rate of improvement)¹⁰⁰
- ways to embed assessment into daily routines¹⁰¹
- planning next steps for instruction using assessment data¹⁰²

Actions for Implementation

- Provide ongoing opportunities to build assessment knowledge.
- Leverage existing literacy professional development opportunities to include assessment literacy.
- Provide training and support around formative assessment strategies.
- Identify a core set of assessment tools and professional development to ensure that they are administered correctly.

A school that has a truly systematic process for meeting the needs of every child can confidently tell any parent whose child attends the school, 'It does not matter what teacher your child has; we guarantee that your child will receive the time and support needed to learn at high levels.'¹⁰³

—Austin Buffum, *Simplifying Response to Intervention: Four Essential Guiding Principles*

Multi-Tiered System of Supports

Multi-Tiered System of Supports

The Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) evolved from two evidence-based approaches: Response to Intervention (RTI), an academic support process, and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS).¹⁰⁴ In accordance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA),¹⁰⁵ the Nevada State Legislature passed Assembly Bill 275 (2017),¹⁰⁶ establishing the Nevada Integrated Student Supports (NISS). NISS is an integrated MTSS that promotes equity, ensuring effective implementation of evidence-based practices to provide impactful services, practices, and resources to all Nevada students.

MTSS takes a proactive approach to delivering high-quality academic instruction for all students by ensuring flexible learning environments and providing a range of learning experiences and opportunities. The Nevada framework is responsive to effective instruction and intervention, aiming to facilitate student success through high-quality instruction, data-driven decision making, and collaboration.

State support and professional development for MTSS is provided on a voluntary basis to local education agencies (LEAs). Since the COVID-19 pandemic, many districts have focused on social-emotional and behavioral supports, which were broadly needed as students transitioned back to the classroom.¹⁰⁷ Today, although MTSS is intended to include academic interventions, its implementation varies across the state and does not have a universal academic focus.

MTSS is a framework for quality instruction that is supported at multiple levels of the education system through multiple teaming structures:

- State Leadership Team – The State Leadership Team ensures that Nevada has the staffing and resources to provide districts with professional development and support to implement MTSS for their LEA.
- District Leadership Teams – District Leadership Teams provide guidance and support for school MTSS teams and ensure that the work of teams is aligned with state goals.
- School Teams – School Teams review student data, identify students who need support beyond Tier 1 instruction, identify evidence-based interventions for students, and monitor student progress.

An MTSS focused on literacy divides instructional support into three tiers, sharing the same structure as one developed for social-emotional and behavioral supports. The three tiers provide more opportunities to personalize learning opportunities to meet the specific pedagogical and cultural needs of students while maintaining rigorous, common expectations for all students.

The three tiers are as follows:

Tier 1 – Universal Support for All Students

Tier 1 instruction is universal instruction that all students receive in a general education classroom, including differentiated instruction and Universal Design for Learning. Tier 1 instruction is standards-aligned and may include whole-group and small-group instruction. Quality components include evidence-based materials and instructional

practices that integrate social-emotional learning with academic learning.¹⁰⁸ This tier is the foundation for learning and is intended to meet the needs of most students. At least 80% of students should meet expectations without interventions, and 95% of students who meet expectations in the fall should meet expectations in the spring. If these goals are not met, there is a Tier 1 need to address. Steps should be taken to determine the need for a classwide intervention.

Tier 2 – Targeted Interventions for Students at Risk

Tier 2 instruction is targeted interventions for those students who need more focused or individualized support. This tier includes small-group instruction for students who need academic support beyond what is included in core classroom instruction. This additional intervention can be provided as either push-in support, with an additional instructor in the classroom, or pull-out support outside the classroom. It should not supplant grade-level instruction.

Tier 3 – Individualized Support for Students with the Highest Need

Tier 3 instruction is intensive intervention for students who have significant challenges, but are not eligible for individualized education plans. Tier 3 instruction includes highly personalized and intensive support.

Note: This section focuses on Tier 2 and Tier 3 instructional support for literacy, as Tier 1 instruction has been covered at length in previous sections.

At the school level, MTSS has three key practices:

- Collaboration
- Progress Monitoring
- Data-Based Decision Making

Key Practice 1: Collaboration

For MTSS, collaborative teams are the key structures that enable comprehensive student support. Collaboration provides opportunities for staff to address problems and make instructional decisions.¹⁰⁹ It also helps shape a school's culture of expectations for both instructional practices and student performance.¹¹⁰ MTSS teams allow for the development of standardized activities within schools for educational intervention, which promotes successful implementation. This includes instructional planning, protocols for analyzing student work, developing data monitoring systems, and identifying common instructional approaches.¹¹¹ Vertical communication across grade bands is needed to maintain continuity of support for students as they move toward grade-level proficiency.

Collaboration between elementary school, middle school, and high school leaders helps new schools know which incoming students may be in need of Tier 2 and Tier 3 literacy intervention, so they can have supports in place to help all students thrive in secondary school.

Actions for Implementation

- Leadership should provide structures and protected time for the MTSS team to meet at least monthly.
- Routines, structures, and protocols for data review, discussion, and instructional decision making should be established.

- Develop communication structures to ensure vertical alignment of literacy supports as students advance from one grade level to the next.
- Teams should be provided support to identify common goals, expectations, and community agreements.
- Tools and structures for information management and progress monitoring of student data should be provided.¹¹²

Key Practice 2: Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring focuses on instructional decision making for individual students in general and special education while tracking student growth toward identified goals. Yearly goals are determined using baseline screening data and progress monitoring tools as well as curriculum-based assessments to monitor the rate of student growth toward their goals. Curriculum-Based Measurements (CBMs) meet the following criteria: align with the school's curriculum, are administered frequently, and use the results to drive instructional decisions.¹¹³

Tier 2 intervention should be considered when a student's performance on screening assessments and their rate of progress both fall below the rate of their peers. Teacher observations regarding student progress during Tier 1 classroom instruction and interventions should also be taken into account to ensure that students are receiving all possible Tier 1 literacy supports. Tier 3 intervention should only be considered when students fail to make progress with Tier 2 interventions.¹¹⁴

Benchmark assessments and screening tools may be used for progress monitoring. However, additional progress measures should be used for more frequent and targeted assessment. These Tier 2 and Tier 3 assessments should include short (1 to 5 minutes) probing assessments utilizing CBMs and/or specific standards-based assessments.¹¹⁵ For literacy instruction, this progress monitoring can include curriculum-based measures such as listening to a student's reading, observing and noting patterns of mistakes, and using a rubric to review writing samples.

Actions for Implementation

- Use data to select evidence-based instructional strategies and design intervention programs and individualized instructional supports for at-risk learners.
- Identify a comprehensive set of progress-monitoring assessments.
- Identify students who are not demonstrating adequate progress; therefore, require additional or alternative forms of instruction.

Key Practice 3: Data-Based Decision Making

Using data-based decision-making processes enable MTSS team members to best match instruction and support with student needs. This use of data is perhaps one of the most critical features within a system of multi-tiered supports.¹¹⁶ Oftentimes, data are collected for reporting purposes and may be aggregated and discussed at the end of each school year, but in an MTSS model, data are collected for immediate decision making.

Intervention data should be looked at daily, weekly, monthly, or as frequently as needed by the team. In addition to showing the impact of the implementation on student outcomes, data are also used to help measure the fidelity of the MTSS implementation.¹¹⁷

Assessment data help school-based MTSS teams to identify and clarify specific problems and modify practices or programs used for targeted interventions and supports. District and Nevada Department of Education MTSS teams can use aggregated assessment data, along with implementation data, to monitor program effectiveness, inform the allocation of resources, develop policies, and help identify training and coaching needs. Data-based decision making ensures that students are getting the support they need and that resources are allocated effectively.¹¹⁸

Actions for Implementation

- Provide professional development in assessment literacy for leaders and staff.
- Provide coaching to help build the capacity of teachers and leaders to utilize data for informed decisions.¹¹⁹
- Monitor schoolwide implementation of data-driven decision making in grade-level and content teams.

MTSS for Secondary Students

Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports remain the same across grade levels, but elementary structures and strategies cannot simply be transplanted to secondary schools; they must be adapted to allow for the different contexts of secondary schools.¹²⁰

Data-Based Decision Making for Secondary Students: Data-based decision making is critical for all students who are in need of targeted Tier 2 or Tier 3 support, but it is particularly important for Nevada’s adolescent learners. Adolescents who need literacy intervention in middle and high school have likely experienced literacy difficulties since they started school and have likely already spent numerous hours receiving literacy support. Furthermore, for these older readers, time is of the essence—the number of years left to support them is diminishing. These factors for older readers mandate urgent attention. Literacy support for adolescents needs to be: (1) targeted to their specific needs and strengths; (2) motivating; and (3) research based. Data for decision making should be nuanced enough to identify adolescents in need of support in: word reading, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing. Evidenced-based practices and research-informed programs for each of these areas should be used accordingly. For adolescents who would benefit from support in all or most of these areas, comprehensive interventions that take a multi-component approach to supporting adolescent literacy should be used.

After data-based decisions have been made, secondary schools need to navigate both logistical and instructional challenges for implementing literacy intervention. Logistical challenges may include making time for interventions in the daily schedule while: (1) providing all students access to both their core curriculum and their electives; (2) providing intervention instructors for groups; and (3) finding space for intervention groups to meet. Instructional challenges may include: (1) departmentalization and lack of ownership of the responsibility; (2) lack of curriculum and materials at the students’ instructional level; and (3) a lack of teacher knowledge in literacy instruction to support students.¹²¹ The actions for implementation can help leaders and educators put systems in place to ensure all secondary students who need literacy support receive it.

Actions for Implementation

Every secondary school is different, and each school's MTSS team will need to determine the exact structures and supports that will work for them. Common strategies for secondary interventions were identified in a research brief by Samantha Durrance.¹²² They include the following:

- **Strengthen core instruction to reduce the need for intervention:** Drawing on the Tier 1 section of this plan, as well as the grade-band recommendations in Appendix 1, strengthen core literacy practices that can support all students.
- **Adjust the master schedule to create a dedicated period for intervention and enrichment:** Time and space are needed both for intervention and for MTSS team meetings to review data and problem solve.
- **Create an MTSS team and carefully select intervention teachers:** The best intervention teachers are those who “are willing to get to know their students and differentiate their teaching based on student need.”¹²³ Intervention teachers do not need to be limited to resource teachers, but may include teachers from other disciplines if they have the interest.
- **Select evidence-based intervention strategies or programs:** Ensure that intervention programs and materials meet both evidence-based criteria for ESSA and the particular learning needs of students. The most common instructional targets for adolescents with histories of reading difficulty are decoding multisyllabic words, fluency with grade level texts, reading comprehension, and engaging with complex texts. There are established evidence-based instructional routines to support growth in these areas.¹²⁴
- **Identify and group students who need intervention:** Use multiple types of data to identify students for small-group support.
- **Provide ongoing professional development and supports for MTSS:** All staff, particularly teachers and classified staff responsible for providing intervention support, need ongoing professional development in both literacy instructional strategies and social-emotional learning strategies.
- **Develop or identify structures and resources to support MTSS:** Structures, resources, and tools should be developed to support consistency of interventions across the school. To select specific instructional approaches and intervention programs for literacy, use research-aligned tools, such as the Adolescent Literacy Intervention Selection Tool.¹²⁵



**Improving literacy outcomes
for all students starts with
consistently implementing
evidence-based practices,
and implementation
requires strong leadership.**

¹²⁶

—Dr. Mikkaka Overstreet, Education Northwest



Leadership

Leadership

Literacy leaders hold a range of responsibilities to ensure the success of literacy programs. They maintain and uphold the Nevada Academic Content Standards in literacy instruction and have a comprehensive understanding of how the districts and schools operate together as a system. They organize and lead teams cohesively, aligning efforts to improve literacy outcomes and to manage the resources necessary for effective program implementation.¹²⁷ Recognizing the field's constant evolution with new research and practices, literacy leaders foster a culture of continuous professional development and growth. This approach is grounded in improvement science,¹²⁸ which enhances educational practices through iterative testing and refinement across different contexts. It acknowledges the variability in practice implementation and emphasizes continuous monitoring and adaptation to optimize educational outcomes.

Literacy Leadership for Secondary Schools

Many students enter middle and high school with literacy skills well below their grade level, and as a result, they are unable to fully access the grade level content in their classes. Literacy is essential to secondary school success and college and career readiness. Reading comprehension, text analysis, and writing are necessary skills to be successful in math, science, history, and all other academic subjects, yet the vast majority of secondary content area teachers have not been prepared to support literacy instruction along with the content knowledge they teach. Additionally, the structure of secondary schools does not lend itself easily to supporting students with gaps in their literacy skills.

Secondary leaders must convey the importance of literacy for all students and build an academic culture of literacy learning. Although content area teachers are not expected to be reading teachers, good instruction in any content area should include application of literacy strategies. Leaders can work with staff to ensure that literacy strategies are integrated into instruction to support student access to content knowledge and to ensure student access to materials across content areas that they can read, including high-interest/low-level books designed for secondary students.

The leadership practices below contribute to successful literacy outcomes for elementary and secondary learners. School leadership strongly influences student learning and is linked to collective leadership.¹²⁹ The Four Domains of Rapid School Improvement categorizes leadership into four key practices for school improvement:¹³⁰

- Be a Transformative Leader
- Develop Talent
- Transform Instruction
- Shift Culture

Key Practice 1: Be a Transformative Leader

The impact of leadership practices on the implementation of literacy initiatives is evident among proactive leaders who foster a culture that prioritizes literacy proficiency.¹³¹ To be a transformative leader, it is important for leaders to build their own knowledge of literacy instruction so they may inspire and motivate educators to cultivate a passion for literacy that fosters dynamic instruction. The literacy vision of a district or school provides the foundation for effective literacy instruction. It sets the strategic direction for instruction, professional development, collaboration, and support.¹³² By articulating a shared vision for literacy excellence grounded in Nevada’s definition of the science of reading, leaders align educators’ efforts toward common goals, enhance collaboration, and chart a path for improved proficiency.¹³³

Literacy goals should be informed by literacy assessment data. These goals may be included in the annual School Performance Plan and should reflect both overall growth and the needs of groups of students who have not yet received the support they need to thrive. When developing goals, all students should be held to high expectations, with the understanding that some students may need additional support. Goals should be revisited throughout the year, not only to measure performance, but also to ensure that the actions to support them are being fully implemented.

Family and community engagement in literacy is crucial. Meaningful family engagement is based on the shared responsibility of parents, educators, and community members for students’ academic, physical, social-emotional, and behavioral development. This engagement is nurtured through a deliberate process embraced throughout the school, empowering adults to support student growth, address learning barriers, and ensure college and career readiness. Effective family engagement systems, policies, and practices reflect diverse school communities and honors the richness in language, culture, and experiences of any school community.

Actions for Implementation

- Develop the content knowledge of leaders in literacy to guide decision making.
- Build leadership capacity to understand, observe, and provide actionable feedback on literacy instruction.
- Ensure that all teachers have access to the Nevada Academic Content Standards for instruction and require that they are maintained and upheld.
- Assist with identification and provide instructional support for students with or at risk for dyslexia in accordance with Nevada’s laws and Dyslexia Guidance Documents.
- Develop a shared vision for literacy excellence grounded in Nevada’s commitment to evidence-based Tier 1 instruction for reading and writing to align efforts toward a common goal.
- Inspire and motivate educators to develop an instructional environment in which a passion for literacy is cultivated.
- Prioritize improvement in literacy and communicate its urgency.
- Monitor short- and long-range goals.
- Lead district-level teams in selection of curriculum from the Nevada Department of Education’s approved list.
- Coordinate support and resources for effective implementation of high-quality curriculum.
- Stay abreast of advances in literacy instruction, research, and technology, including the use of generative artificial intelligence to support teaching and learning.

Key Practice 2: Develop Talent

At the heart of literacy success is a steadfast commitment to equity.¹³⁴ Leaders at all levels must prioritize equity in their decisions, acknowledging the unique needs of diverse students and working to eliminate systemic barriers to literacy achievement. This commitment embraces the varied identities and experiences of students, creating a learning environment that meets the needs of all students. Leaders actively recruit and support educators from diverse backgrounds to enhance inclusivity and representation. Systematically analyzing literacy achievement data across demographic groups enables targeted interventions and resource allocation. Including student input and perspectives in assessing literacy needs ensures that initiatives are responsive to their requirements and experiences.

Leaders prioritize talent development by encouraging educators to build their capacity through coaching and sustained professional development opportunities.¹³⁵ Leadership practices that emphasize ongoing professional development are crucial in boosting the effectiveness of instruction.¹³⁶ The literacy field is constantly evolving with new research and practices. Leaders recognize the importance of ongoing learning and improvement. This systematic approach aims to enhance educational practices through iterative testing and refinement in different contexts. It acknowledges the variability in practice implementation and emphasizes continuous monitoring and adaptation to optimize educational outcomes in specific settings.

Actions for Implementation

- Embrace a steadfast commitment to fostering a culture of continuous learning and growth centered on literacy improvement.
- Demonstrate a commitment to professional development by keeping up to date with the latest research, instructional methods, and technological advances necessary for implementing effective literacy instruction.
- Establish clear expectations, roles, and responsibilities for staff around literacy instruction.
- Establish clear performance expectations and systems for supportive feedback and growth.
- Monitor student progress and intervention fidelity.

Key Practice 3: Transform Instruction

Enhancing student learning outcomes relies on systemwide support for Nevada’s equity-oriented, comprehensive approach to strengthen Tier 1 literacy instruction based on five key practices: (1) center all students as expert language users; (2) provide rich oral language experiences; (3) explicitly teach prerequisite foundational skills for engaging with print; (4) scaffold the reading comprehension of complex texts across formats, genres, and disciplines; and (5) model and guide the expression of written ideas for a variety of audiences. These five key practices depend on strong standards-based teaching; data-driven planning, differentiation, and individualization; research-based pedagogical methods; and classroom management.¹³⁷

Effective literacy leadership begins with a solid foundation of knowledge and expertise in the five Tier 1 key practices. At its core, effective literacy leadership involves creating an environment in which every student can become a proficient reader, writer, and skilled communicator. This foundational knowledge is crucial for leaders to build such an environment and serves multiple critical purposes. Effective leaders recognize the importance of a dynamic approach that leverages the diverse values and expertise of staff members, especially those with essential literacy knowledge. Schools that adopt a distributive leadership model, in which decision making is shared among a team of leaders, can tap into the wealth of talent among educators.

A significant aspect of leadership is strategic resource allocation.¹³⁸ This includes the distribution of staff across schools, allocation of time, consideration of scheduling needs, and providing a supportive environment for teachers to implement curriculum and access literacy resources. Leaders gather teams to review and select approved instructional materials for adoption in their districts. After a high-quality curriculum is in place, leaders are instrumental in allocating resources and supervising staff to help them refine their skills. Monitoring the implementation of curriculum through frequent classroom visits is essential.

Actions for Implementation

- Ensure access to standards-based curricula.
- Provide support to ensure that evidence is used in instructional planning.
- Monitor Tier 1 instruction and ensure that identified evidence-based practices are being used.

Key Practice 4: Shift Culture


Attaining the necessary level of commitment to elevate literacy in Nevada depends on many people working together to provide a comprehensive and vertically aligned approach. This requires both high academic expectations and a concerted effort.¹³⁹

This effort includes family and community involvement, both of which play a vital role in enhancing literacy opportunities for students.¹⁴⁰ Their participation in a child’s educational journey supports a dynamic system extending beyond the classroom. A cohesive literacy approach emerges when open communication and collaboration between educators, families, and communities are fostered. Active family participation in literacy activities and community initiatives demonstrates the significance of reading and writing in real-world contexts. This interconnected approach not only reinforces the importance of literacy, but also promotes a collaborative and nurturing environment.

School and community libraries should be integral in fostering a shared enthusiasm for literacy within educational settings, at home, and throughout the broader community. Libraries play a crucial role in promoting literacy by collaborating with schools to provide access to resources, assist with schoolwide literacy initiatives, and foster a reading culture. Beyond the academic setting, they extend their impact by providing family literacy programs and partnering with local organizations, creating a community-wide enthusiasm for reading.

Actions for Implementation

- Model reading throughout the school and build in opportunities for adults and students to read together.
- Create opportunities for the school community to come together to discuss and reflect on student learning.
- Build a strong community intensely focused on Nevada’s comprehensive approach to Tier 1 literacy instruction.



One of the most important actions, things a leader can do, is to lead by example. If you want everyone else to be passionate, committed, dedicated, and motivated, you go first. ¹⁴¹

—Marshall Goldsmith



Professional Development

Professional Development

This section defines professional development, outlines the essential elements of high-quality professional development, and offers action steps for leaders. Professional development is an integral part of school and local education agency strategies for providing educators (teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, and early childhood educators) with the knowledge and skills necessary to meet Nevada Academic Content Standards.^{142,143} Research demonstrates a positive link between teacher professional development, teaching practices, and student outcomes.¹⁴⁴

Well-designed and well-implemented professional development should be regarded as a vital element of a comprehensive teaching and learning system that equips students with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for success in the 21st century.¹⁴⁵ To maintain a coherent system supporting teachers throughout their careers, professional development should connect to their experiences, align with teaching standards and evaluations, and extend to leadership opportunities. This ensures a comprehensive system dedicated to the continuous growth and development of Nevada’s educators.

High quality professional development should be aligned to Nevada’s Standards for Professional Development and designed to meet the conditions outlined by Learning Forward’s Standards for Professional Learning. Effective professional development is interactive, ongoing, and tailored to teachers’ needs. It promotes teachers’ ownership of their learning and encourages them to apply new knowledge in their teaching environments.¹⁴⁶ Educators should have ongoing opportunities to continually update professional knowledge.

Professional development initiatives centered on evidence-based literacy instruction should be prioritized and differentiated for educators with different roles in the system. For example, professional development opportunities for administrators should include methods to observe high-quality literacy instruction, and professional development for literacy coaches and specialists should include advanced training in coaching techniques and intervention strategies. Equipping educators with knowledge of the most research-based instruction and providing them with opportunities for integrating that knowledge into their practice can contribute to improved literacy outcomes for all students.

Three Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDPs) provide high-quality professional development across the state concerning the Nevada Academic Content Standards (Nevada Revised Statute, 391.512). In addition, the RPDPs implement the Nevada Early Literacy Intervention Program, providing professional development on evidence-based reading methods.

The overall aim of literacy professional development is to improve literacy instruction in order to boost student learning outcomes. Nevada’s approach to literacy professional development is based on an extensive review of the literature over the last three decades, which found that effective literacy professional development centers on seven key practices:¹⁴⁷

1. Provide Focused Content
2. Foster Active Learning
3. Support Collaboration
4. Use Models

5. Provide Coaching and Extra Support
6. Engage in Reflection and Feedback Cycles
7. Ensure Sustained Duration

Key Practice 1: Provide Focused Content

Teachers at all levels should engage in professional development on Nevada’s comprehensive approach to Tier 1 literacy instruction, assessment, and family engagement. The professional development plan should also be informed by analysis of literacy data collected at school sites and the needs of the students and staff. Ideally, the content is aligned with school and district priorities to provide coherence for educators and should include evidence-based practices for delivering literacy instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners, English language learners, and students with special needs.

Avenues for literacy-focused professional development may include face-to-face opportunities as well as technology-facilitated professional development. Online professional development modules developed by literacy experts have been used successfully to teach about early literacy instruction, especially when the modules include opportunities for interactive activities and dialogue with peers.¹⁴⁸

Providing professional development in conjunction with curriculum and classroom materials should be prioritized.¹⁴⁹ Teachers who have access to high-quality curriculum and expert support combined with collaborative active learning opportunities are more likely to impact student achievement.

Actions for Implementation

- Develop needs assessments centered on the seven key practices, along with corresponding instructional targets that make up Nevada’s equity-oriented, comprehensive, and effective approach to Tier 1 literacy instruction. This is one way to ensure a data-centered approach to determine professional development goals and focus on actual rather than perceived needs.¹⁵⁰
- Provide professional development in assessment literacy for leaders and staff. Analyze student literacy assessment data from needs assessments to pinpoint the most essential and desired areas and formats for professional development. This data can help ensure that professional development remains relevant to practice and supports the knowledge and skills educators seek to develop. See the Assessment section, Key Practice 3, for topics to consider for building teachers’ assessment literacy.
- Focus cohort opportunities on comprehensive professional development developed by literacy experts.
- Provide professional development specifically for new teachers to understand and implement the Nevada Academic Content Standards.
- Ensure all professional development aligns to Nevada’s Standards for Professional Development.

Key Practice 2: Foster Active Learning

Professional development experiences should be designed to address not only what teachers learn, but also how they learn. Principles of adult learning should be kept in mind as leaders shape professional development opportunities.¹⁵¹ Reflection and inquiry should be central to the learning process. Active learning moves away from traditional, lecture-based models to engage teachers directly in the practices they are learning, ideally connected to their classrooms and students. Unlike passive sit-and-listen lectures, active learning involves using

authentic artifacts, interactive activities, and other strategies for deeply embedded, highly contextualized professional development. Engaging teachers in activities in which they actively participate, such as modeling, role-playing, and peer teaching, enhances learning and retention. Providing time for educators to observe peer mentors teaching, along with opportunities to collaborate and debrief afterward, gives teachers the opportunity to learn from experts.

Actions for Implementation

- Organize continuous improvement around professional development that is grounded in the principles of adult learning.
- Link professional development to curriculum.
- Provide choice in learning opportunities based on a needs assessment.
- Provide ongoing professional development that is inquiry based and literacy focused.

Key Practice 3: Support Collaboration

Teacher collaboration is an important element of professional development and can include within-school interactions as well as schoolwide collaboration with professionals beyond the school doors.

By working collaboratively at the site level, educators can positively affect a school culture to embrace continuous improvement.^{152,153} Collaborative professional development opportunities, such as professional learning communities (PLCs), encourage teachers to share knowledge, strategies, and experiences. A PLC is a group of educators who collaborate to expand their knowledge and enhance their instruction to improve student achievement.¹⁵⁴ PLCs meet on a regular basis. They review data, read about evidence-based literacy practices, share ideas, set collaborative goals, problem solve, and work together to plan; provide a structured approach to enhance team effectiveness; and establish a system and protocols to ensure teachers engage in ongoing action research and collective inquiry.

School leadership plays a crucial role in embedding PLCs within the school culture and ensuring that their foundational structure is consistently implemented. Leaders prioritize PLCs by scheduling common preparatory times, by grade level or subject area, at which teachers can meet weekly to participate actively in planning, sharing knowledge, and learning together. Throughout the year, PLC teams closely monitor progress data to evaluate the effectiveness of each tier of support. If progress is insufficient, teams adjust instruction in the relevant tier. When students struggle with reading progress, teams focus on variables within their school's control that can significantly impact progress.

Actions for Implementation

- Evaluate and redesign the use of time and school schedules to ensure time for professional development and collaboration, including participation in professional learning communities (PLCs), peer coaching and observations across classrooms, and collaborative planning.
- Offer resources and guidelines to assist PLCs in applying evidence-based strategies.

Key Practice 4: Use Models

Professional development that incorporates models of effective practice has been shown to enhance teacher learning and support achievement. Curricular and instructional models, along with instructional modeling, provide educators with a vision of practice that supports their own learning and growth.

Actions for Implementation

- Provide curricular models, including the following:
 - » videos of demonstration lessons
 - » videos to increase understanding of literacy assessments
 - » demonstration lessons
 - » unit or lesson plans
 - » peer observation
 - » sample literacy assessments
 - » student work samples

Key Practice 5: Provide Coaching and Expert Support

At the elementary level, support is provided by the Read by Grade 3 Learning Strategist. State regulations specify the duties of the Read by Grade 3 Learning Strategist as follows:

- demonstrate leadership in instruction, intervention, assessment, professional development, and family engagement relating to literacy as outlined in a plan to improve the literacy of students as required by NRS 388.157;
- assist teachers at the school by implementing a system of support that includes various methods to provide literacy instruction, intervention services, and intensive instruction for students who have been identified as deficient in the subject area of reading, including students who are reading below grade-level expectations;
- support teachers in establishing plans to monitor the growth and increase the proficiency of students in reading by regularly assessing the growth of students in any area of deficiency in reading, including reading below grade-level expectations;
- collaborate with the principal of the elementary school to develop a schedule and plan for professional development;
- provide any necessary additional instruction to teachers and site administrators concerning approved assessments;
- provide instruction and support for the parents and guardians of students who have been identified as reading below grade-level expectations; and
- assist teachers and administrators in analyzing student data and the effectiveness of intervention services and intensive instruction to make strategic and ongoing instructional decisions.

Literacy specialists provide coaching, guidance, and support in implementing evidence-based reading practices and interventions. They help educators analyze student data to develop and refine instructional strategies, ensure fidelity to research-based methods, and address individual student needs, thereby enhancing overall reading outcomes.

The Nevada Administrative Code (NAC), 388.666, further specifies the content focus of professional development provided by a learning strategist for teachers of K–4 students as summarized below:

- Nevada Academic Content Standards for English Language Arts (ELA)
- PreK–12 Nevada State Literacy Plan
- evidence-based practices for instruction and intervention for literacy
- methods for screening and intervention concerning dyslexia
- use of assessments approved by the Nevada State Board of Education (NSBE)
- methods for effectively delivering and receiving constructive feedback
- use of data to improve literacy instruction
- methods for maintaining collaborative and reflective communication

To build capacity to effectively support teachers, state regulations also require learning strategists to engage in their own professional development around the following:

- Nevada Academic Content Standards for English Language Arts K–3
- PreK–12 Nevada State Literacy Plan
- evidence-based practices for literacy instruction and intervention for literacy
- methods for screening and intervention for dyslexia and other reading disabilities, including the minimum standards prescribed by the NSBE for the special education of students with dyslexia and Nevada’s dyslexia guidance
- use of NSBE approved assessments
- methods for effectively delivering and receiving constructive feedback
- methods for assisting the NSBE or other governing bodies to prepare a plan to improve the literacy of K–3 students in alignment with the PreK–12 Nevada State Literacy Plan
- Nevada Educator Performance Framework
- national standards for literacy coaching

Elementary schools may have a Read by Grade 3 Literacy Strategist and a coach to offer vital support for continuous collaborative learning and for sustaining the vision of a professional development system.¹⁵⁵ The primary responsibilities of a literacy coach are to collaborate with teachers and to foster schoolwide improvement in literacy instruction and learning.¹⁵⁶

An expert literacy coach brings many strengths to facilitate the coaching cycle both for early career educators and for more experienced educators. A literacy coach may work with educators one on one or in a group, using a variety of ways to implement high-quality curriculum, instructional materials, and aligned assessments.¹⁵⁷ By participating in the coaching feedback cycle, expert literacy coaches are able to meet with teachers, collaborate and assess instructional needs, model and observe instruction, and provide nonevaluative feedback. In collaboration with

administrators, instructional coaches play a crucial role in ensuring the professional development strategies that teachers acquire are effectively implemented. These coaches serve as facilitators, mentors, and support systems for teachers, helping to translate professional development into actionable classroom practices.

A literacy coach should regularly collaborate and support classroom teaching through co-teaching, co-planning, and data analysis with teachers. Professional development through coaching, leading data teams, and leading workshops should be provided by literacy coaches.

These practices are especially relevant in secondary schools, where coaches should work with teachers within and across the content areas. Within content areas, coaches can help teachers from the same content area identify the literacy demands of their content areas and plan for scaffolded learning opportunities for students to develop as readers, writers, speakers, listeners, and thinkers in math, social studies, ELA, science, and any number of electives. Across content areas, coaches can help interdisciplinary teams of teachers commit to regular opportunities to build vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and writing skills. Importantly, coaches in secondary schools can help teachers develop the professional knowledge that enables them to simultaneously develop literacy skills and meet learning objectives in the academic disciplines. Indeed, these two areas of development are mutually reinforcing.

It is important for literacy coaches to understand the coaching process, adult learning theory, organizational leadership, and the process of assessment as it relates to literacy instruction.¹⁵⁸ Literacy coaching at the middle and high school levels shifts to a focus on content and disciplinary literacy instruction; however, it is still important for a literacy coach at both the primary and secondary levels to understand the process of coaching. Literacy coaches at both levels must establish credibility, a trusting relationship, and an ability to work with teachers. A literacy coach continually needs to be able to participate in a collaborative process of inquiry that will promote teacher reflection, decision making for instruction, and problem solving through challenges.

Actions for Implementation

- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of literacy specialists and coaches. See Appendix 2 for resources to support collaboration between literacy specialists and teachers.
- Ensure that coaching is individualized, intensive, sustained, context specific, and literacy focused.¹⁵⁹
- Plan for the professional development needs of literacy coaches and literacy interventionists/specialists. Professional development for literacy coaches and specialists should include advanced training in literacy assessment, intervention strategies, and coaching techniques.

Key Practice 6: Engage in Reflection and Feedback Cycles

Regular opportunities for teachers to receive feedback and reflect on their practices are crucial for continuous improvement.¹⁶⁰ Mentor teachers and coaches observe and provide feedback in a nonevaluative capacity. Professional development models linked to improved student learning provide dedicated time for teachers to reflect, receive feedback, and adjust their practices. Although feedback and reflection are distinct practices, they complement each other to guide teachers toward the expert practices they have observed or learned during professional development. Effective professional development programs involve sharing both positive and constructive feedback on authentic teacher practices like lesson plans, demonstration lessons, and instructional videos.¹⁶¹ These activities typically take place during coaching sessions or group workshops facilitated by a skilled professional development facilitator. Coaches and mentors must build relationships with teachers in order for them to participate in such feedback cycles.

Actions for Implementation

- Establish regular opportunities for educators to reflect and receive feedback on their literacy instruction.
- Develop an evaluation plan to measure the efficacy of professional development.

Key Practice 7: Ensure Sustained Duration

Professional development should occur over an extended period, enabling teachers to thoroughly engage with new strategies and integrating them into their practice. Just as students need spiral review of content, teachers need the opportunity to learn, practice, receive feedback, evaluate, and make adjustments as needed. Meaningful professional development that leads to cumulative changes in practice cannot be achieved through brief, one-time workshops. Traditional episodic and fragmented professional development lacks the time required for rigorous and cumulative learning. Sustained professional development, which provides multiple opportunities for teachers to engage with a single set of concepts or practices, is more likely to transform teaching practices and enhance student learning.

Actions for Implementation

- Cultivate a culture of ongoing professional development. Partner with your local RPDP to provide sustained professional development and responsiveness to the specific needs of leaders and educators and to the school and district contexts in which teaching and learning will take place.
- Provide flexible funding and avenues for attaining credit for learning opportunities that include sustained engagement in mentoring and coaching.
- Share information about pathways for teachers to obtain the Secondary Single-Subject Reading Endorsement and the Reading Specialist Endorsement.
- Share information about learning opportunities offered by Nevada’s higher education institutions.
- Develop long-range professional development plans that include all staff (rather than only those who opt in to learning outside school hours) and that remain focused on improving literacy instruction in an iterative manner that responds to the learning needs of educators as they implement their learning.

**There is no power for
change greater than a
community discovering
what it cares about.¹⁶²**

—Margaret Wheatley

Family and Community Engagement

Family and Community Engagement

Teaming with families and communities in education refers to the collaborative efforts among schools, families, and community members to enhance the educational experience and outcomes for students, especially when it comes to improving literacy. Ensuring literacy and educational success is a shared responsibility. The aim is to create a supportive network that fosters student success. Stakeholders have the capacity to support student growth and learning outcomes. As stated by Mapp and Bergman in a 2021 synthesis of research on family engagement, “When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more.”¹⁶³

In 2021, the Nevada Department of Education gathered an advisory committee to develop and define the state’s Family Engagement Framework to offer further guidance to educational stakeholders, including districts, schools, educators, community partners, and families.¹⁶⁴ For literacy to thrive, all stakeholders must contribute to the support of involvement and engagement.

The Nevada Department of Education defines family engagement as follows:

Family engagement is a shared responsibility between schools, families, and communities where all receive equitable access to tools and supports needed to successfully work together toward the development of children and youth for college, career, and lifelong learning.¹⁶⁵

This definition implies that all stakeholders have the intent and ability to impact positive student growth and learning outcomes. This aligns with the research finding that children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more when schools work together with families to support learning.¹⁶⁶ The framework also contains a toolkit intended to help navigate through the many possible stumbling blocks along the pathway of effective family engagement for student success.

In an earlier report, Henderson and Mapp also share that students demonstrate more improvement when families are engaged in ways that are linked to learning, stating that building partnerships with families that respond to their concerns and honor their contributions helps to sustain connections aimed at improving student achievement.¹⁶⁷ Therefore, a focus on building partnerships around literacy improvement will support the effectiveness of literacy improvement initiatives.

Nevada’s *Portrait of a Learner*, Figure 5, looks into the future of learning in education and describes what a learner looks like in today’s world. Building this image in partnership with families and discovering what this means for future generations is essential. It acknowledges that “core academic knowledge is the foundation from which students can apply durable skills”¹⁶⁸ and offers five essential questions for students to explore:

- How will I grow in my learning?
- How do I build and sustain relationships and community?
- How will I contribute to make an impact?
- How will I thrive?

- How might we create learning relationships, experiences, and environments that put these shared values into practice?

For students to gain the literacy skills to fully engage with these questions and learn the skills needed for functioning successfully in the real world, family and community partnerships are essential. Evidence-based practice has identified some key components of family engagement to support this partnership.

Key practices of family and community engagement include the following:

- Welcome All Families
- Communicate Effectively
- Support Academic Success
- Share Power (Involvement vs. Engagement)
- Connect with the Community

Figure 5. Nevada's *Portrait of a Learner*



Source: Nevada's *Portrait of a Learner*

Key Practice 1: Welcome All Families

Welcoming families means actively encouraging and facilitating a variety of opportunities for families to be involved in the educational process and community. It involves creating an inviting and inclusive environment that not only gets families in the door, but also values and motivates them to become active participants in their children's education. This inclusive and inviting environment is not limited to educators on a school campus, rather it begins with office personnel as the front line welcoming visitors to the school.

Educational leadership, policymakers, and teachers have access to a plethora of information, research, and resources for implementing effective parent and family engagement policies and practices to improve student academic success, mental health, and self-esteem. At the core of welcoming families is treating all families with respect and acceptance in order to make the educational setting emotionally safe for students as well as their families.

We need to welcome all families as experts contributing their own unique assets, understandings, and talents to their children's learning. This requires honoring some core assumptions about families that may require some reflection and effort to develop and maintain:

- Trust that all families want the best educational experience for their children.¹⁶⁹
- All backgrounds, cultures, and languages have value.¹⁷⁰
- Families have the capacity to help make decisions about their children's learning.¹⁷¹
- Families want to and can contribute to helping their children.¹⁷²

Engaging families around literacy is foundational to student success because literacy is foundational to all other academic subjects and elective courses. Welcoming all families is the first step in building partnerships that help enable students to grow to be independent, capable community members who are critical consumers of information.

Actions for Implementation

- Listen to and draw on families' knowledge about their children's strengths and how they learn.
- Listen to family members about their experiences, treatment, and hopes for future experiences through focus groups, listening sessions, and/or dialogue circles. Train and support family-facing staff in the art of relationship-building conversations with all students and families.
- Model asset-based thinking about students and families through asset-based language and attitudes that center on the intrinsic value of all families as partners. Deficit-focused and biased language and actions regarding students and families should be discouraged.
- Ensure time is allocated for teachers and other educational staff to build positive relationships with families during the contracted day.
- Create opportunities for families to showcase how literacy plays a role in their own culture, jobs, and activities in the school community.

Key Practice 2: Communicate Effectively

Decades of research have shown that there is a strong connection between the literacy skills students learn at home and their academic success.¹⁷³ Strong relationships between schools and families are critical for effective

partnerships between schools and families. School staff that demonstrate authentic respect for families build connections that foster success in and out of school.

Two-way communication in the family's home language and school- and community-based activities can help develop school/home partnerships. Effective communication enables local education agencies (LEAs) and schools to better understand community literacy needs and develop programs and targeted supports that will better assist students and their families. Research from the National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools emphasizes that “programs that successfully connect with families and community invite involvement, are welcoming, and address specific parent and community needs.”¹⁷⁴ Families are more willing to support school literacy initiatives when they feel heard and understood about their specific needs.

Actions for Implementation

- Communicate directly with families, using consistent methods and tools that are accessible to all. Examples include: social media, virtual parent-teacher conferences, home visits, and engaging with families in their community.¹⁷⁵
- Ensure that communication about student literacy performance is ongoing and two-way, and that it equips families with concrete, specific methods to engage with their children's learning in the home.
- Ensure that families know the district's plan and the school's plan to improve literacy and they have access to resources.
- Create resources and tutorials that demonstrate how students can practice literacy skills at home.
- Use language in communications that is clear, precise, and free of jargon.
- Translate important documents and announcements into the home languages of your students.
- Provide opportunities for students to communicate their progress, ideas, and plans for improvement with their families and community, as key partners in their own learning, including:
 - » Student-led conferences and portfolio presentations are two evidence-based practices that support this type of communication.
 - » Student advisory committees and focus groups enable students to have a voice in decision making that will affect them.

Key Practice 3: Support Academic Success

Families are a child's first teacher, and they play a critical role in all facets of literacy development. Language development begins in early childhood with talking, listening, conversing, singing, and playing—all before a child enters the formal educational environment. Regardless of home language, students come to school with an abundance of transferable language skills.¹⁷⁶

Once formal education starts, the partnership between families and schools to support academic success begins. An asset-focused orientation is vital when entering into this partnership. This is an opportunity to develop shared high expectations and goals while honoring the role that families can continue to play in providing a rich language environment in informal settings, including reinforcing what is learned at school.

Actions for Implementation

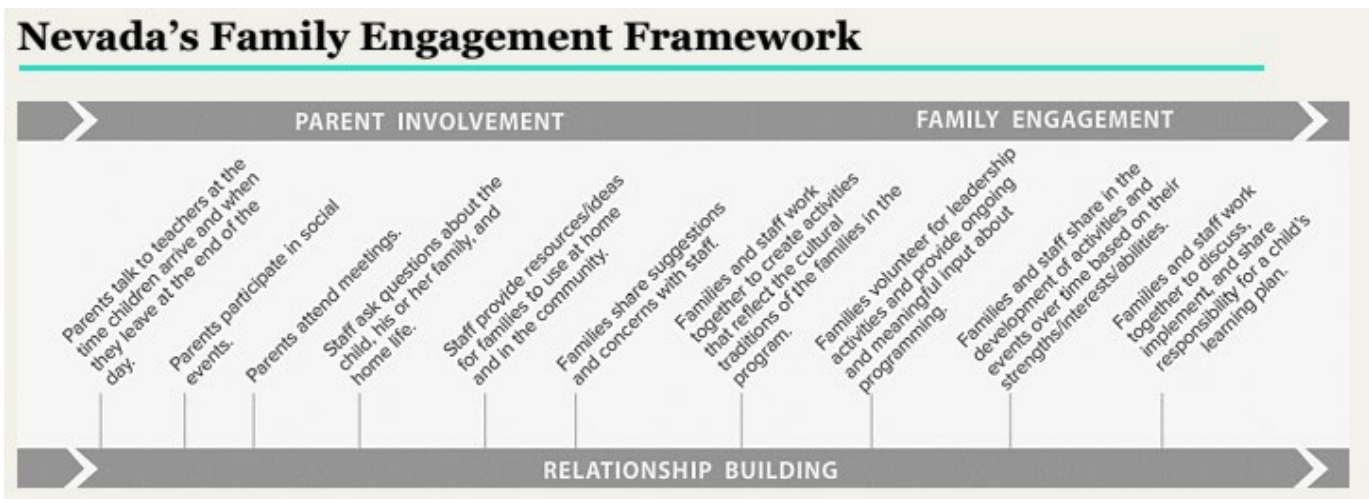
- Regularly provide student data to families and create data-driven conference structures to support parents to understand the data and to use the data to plan next steps.
- Provide parent education opportunities focused on literacy skills to strengthen home literacy support. See Appendix 2 for resources.
- Work with families to plan family-centered and age-appropriate literacy activities that are designed to invite families into their children's learning experiences.
- Connect families with opportunities outside school that will build and support their children's background knowledge, vocabulary acquisition, and experience of the world around them.

Key Practice 4: Share Power (Involvement vs. Engagement)

In Nevada's Family Engagement Framework, a continuum was developed to show the framework of family engagement (see Figure 6 and Appendix 6 for details on the framework). Research shows there is a difference between family involvement and family engagement.¹⁷⁷ Involvement is *doing to* and engagement is *doing with*. The Oxford Advanced American Dictionary defines "involvement" as "the act of taking part in something or dealing with somebody" as opposed to its definition of "engagement" as "being involved with someone or something in an attempt to understand them/it."^{178/179}

Nevada's continuum of engagement begins with social contact and event participation. As relationships are built, engagement progresses to include families providing meaningful input to decisions and sharing responsibility for their children's learning plan. For literacy improvement, this shift requires that LEAs and schools engage with parents as knowledgeable partners in supporting their children's literacy development.

Figure 6. Nevada's Family Engagement Framework Continuum



Source: *Nevada's Family Engagement Framework*

Note: See [Appendix 6](#) for a full description of this figure.

Actions for Implementation

- Solicit feedback from families on the impact of strategies, tools, and/or resources shared with the intent of supporting their engagement with their children’s learning.
- Include families in the process of creating schoolwide literacy goals.
- Create opportunities for families to play a decision-making role in school governance and explore opportunities to develop parents into school leaders.
- Recognize and publicly appreciate the efforts and contributions of parents in the school community through awards and public acknowledgment on school webpages or social media.

Key Practice 5: Connect with the Community

Trusting, inclusive, and responsive community programs complement the partnerships between schools and families. Community programs and organizations can provide additional access to books and essential literacy activities for students, such as read-alouds. Many lower-income students have limited access to books. In 2005, the ratio of age-appropriate books per child available by neighborhood was 1 book for every 13 children in middle-income neighborhoods and 1 book for every 300 children in low-income neighborhoods.¹⁸⁰ LEAs and schools cannot address all of the needs of a community in isolation, which is one of the reasons why community schools are an evidence-based strategy for school improvement.¹⁸¹

Building and developing connections with community organizations, philanthropic groups, and businesses to support literacy initiatives can increase the resources available to address community needs. Schools with strong community partnerships see improvements in academic performance, attendance, and opportunities for learning outside the school environment.¹⁸² Community partnerships can help identify community needs and gaps that some families may be experiencing. Understanding students’ in-school and out-of-school experiences enables school systems to work in partnership to create equitable learning environments for all students.¹⁸³

Actions for Implementation

- Develop a cohesive community engagement plan, built on identified literacy needs, from the school and community resources available in your area.
- Connect families with local organizations that provide literacy support outside school hours.
- Partner with community organizations that support the whole child. Students learn better when their basic needs are met.
 - » Coordinate with health and wellness organizations to bring support to students and families.
 - » Connect families with food banks.
 - » Assist families with outside resources for social-emotional and behavioral support.

Conclusion

The PreK–12 Nevada State Literacy Plan is a starting point for building a future in which the literacy needs of all Nevada students are met so that all students can fully contribute to society. There is much work to do to make the vision outlined in this plan become reality.

Next steps for implementation include the following:

- reviewing all current literacy initiatives and making sure the programs and activities are aligned to the evidence-based practices that have been identified
- identifying the literacy professional development needs of leaders and staff and creating new professional development opportunities where needed
- reviewing current processes and tools for the adoption of curriculum and supplemental materials to ensure identifying the best possible materials for students
- reviewing planning documents to ensure that improving literacy is taken into consideration at all levels of the system
- working with and for Nevada educators to support the development of strategies to improve literacy instruction and intervention

Improving the literacy outcomes of all students will take everyone working together. Nevada is ready for this challenge!

Appendix 1: Considerations by Grade Span

Overview of Tier 1 Literacy Instruction for Grades PreK–K

In the earliest years of school, Tier 1 literacy instruction should permeate every activity. During these years, students are developing their basic literacy skills (see Figure 1, Pyramid of Literacy Development). They are beginning to understand that text has meaning and are developing the earliest building blocks of reading and writing.

<p>Key Practice 1:</p> <p>Center All Students as Expert Language Users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about the linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge students bring to the classroom and help students make connections to what they already know. • Position all language as valuable—clarify that there is no <i>right</i> way to use language, just different ways that are useful for different audiences. • Allow multilingual students to use <i>translanguaging</i>. • Read aloud texts that represent diverse cultures and languages to help students activate, share, and build on their cultural and experiential knowledge.
<p>Key Practice 2:</p> <p>Provide Rich Oral Language Experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a variety of multimodal resources to help students develop vocabulary and listening comprehension. This may include creative dramatics in play centers and experiences in different content areas, such as science experiments, that provide opportunities to generate rich discussion, as well as storytelling and retelling read-alouds. Introduce new vocabulary through oral language activities, especially through read-alouds. • Teach students how to engage in turn-taking and create structured opportunities every day for students to practice, and in well-structured small-group and whole-class discussions use language related to topics that are being studied. • Engage students in conversation throughout the day. Use sophisticated words and take opportunities to model elevated language while ensuring that the language is comprehensible to students. • Use recasts, expansions, and questions to expand students' syntax and vocabulary. • Use songs to foster language development.

Key Practice 3:**Explicitly Teach the Prerequisite Foundational Skills for Engaging with Print**

- Essential instructional targets for these grades include phonological awareness, concepts of print, early word reading (decoding), and spelling.
- Immerse students in alphabet learning, including learning the Alphabet Song. After students memorize the song, track the letters while they sing. Teach a letter a day, share alphabet books, use students' names to review letters, and provide opportunities for students to learn how to hold a pencil correctly and practice letter formation.
- Plan phonological awareness activities that progress from explanation by the teacher to recognition, identification, and finally production by the student.
- Teach students that spoken language can be broken down into smaller segments of sound. Begin by teaching students to recognize larger segments, such as whole words within sentences, and then smaller segments such as syllables, morphemes, and phonemes within a word.
- By kindergarten, many students will be ready to isolate, blend, delete, and replace phonemes in words. Begin with one-syllable words that have two to three phonemes. Invite students to substitute beginning, middle, and ending phonemes to create new words. Display the words when practicing sound manipulation.
- Use a *gradual release of responsibility* model to teach concepts of print during reading and writing activities. Provide guided practice for students to develop the concept of a word in text, which is the ability to finger-point accurately to words in a line of text while reading, without getting off track on two-syllable words.
- Practice finger-pointing by reading single lines in rhymes, poems, or familiar texts that have one- and two-syllable words.
- Draw students' attention to print in text through *print referencing*, which refers to the act of drawing their attention to print concepts and discussing explicit features of print concepts. Read-alouds, classroom routines, and play are excellent opportunities for engaging students in print referencing.
- Support students in recognizing environmental print and symbols.
- Regularly identify book parts and features, such as the front, back, title, and author.
- Teach letter-sound relationships in a systematic and sequential manner, starting with beginning consonants and progressing to consonant blends, digraphs, and short and long vowel sounds.

<p>Key Practice 4:</p> <p>Scaffold the Reading Comprehension of Complex Texts Across Formats, Genres, and Disciplines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential instructional targets for these grades include vocabulary, knowledge, and listening/reading comprehension strategies. • When students are reading, identify key concepts to target for vocabulary instruction. Provide explicit instruction and multiple opportunities for them to practice using key terms. • Activate and build topical knowledge related to text. • Read aloud from a variety of genres on topics appropriate for young learners. Select books with vivid illustrations to support comprehension. • Engage students in discussion before, during, and after reading aloud by asking open-ended questions about the text.
<p>Key Practice 5:</p> <p>Model and Guide the Expression of Written Ideas for a Variety of Audiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential instructional targets for these grades include handwriting, sentence and paragraph crafting for different purposes, and self-regulation. • Provide daily time for writing. • Engage students in shared and interactive writing. • Support writing for Pre–K students by making lists, labeling the room, and offering a variety of writing materials for use in the classroom. Teach children how to identify and write their names. • For young students, celebrate their scribbles and beginning encoding as they begin to approximate letters, and explicitly teach them how to hold pencils and make the shape of letters to develop their handwriting. • Explicitly teach the writing process starting in kindergarten. Writing instruction should go beyond students responding to journal prompts and providing informal opportunities to write independently. • Use trade books as models of writing and mentor texts to support students in their writing of opinions, narratives, and informational texts.

Overview of Tier 1 Literacy Instruction for Grades 1–2

In the early elementary years, Tier 1 literacy instruction should be explicit and systematic, and it should permeate every activity. During these years, students continue to develop their basic literacy skills (see Figure 1, Pyramid of Literacy Development). They are formalizing their understanding of the alphabetic principle and using that knowledge to develop fluency with beginning reading and writing. They are also starting to develop, at a preliminary level, intermediate literacy skills.

<p>Key Practice 1:</p> <p>Center All Students as Expert Language Users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about the linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge students bring to the classroom and help them make connections to what they already know. • Position all language as valuable—clarify that there is no <i>right</i> way to use language, just different ways that are useful for different audiences. • Allow multilingual students to use <i>translanguaging</i>. • Read aloud texts that represent diverse cultures and languages to help students activate, share, and build on their cultural and experiential knowledge.
<p>Key Practice 2:</p> <p>Provide Rich Oral Language Experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a variety of multimodal resources to help students develop vocabulary and listening comprehension. This may include experiences in different content areas, such as science experiments, that provide opportunities to generate rich discussion, as well as storytelling and retelling of read-alouds. Introduce new vocabulary through oral language activities, especially through read-alouds. • Teach students how to engage in turn-taking and create structured opportunities every day for students to practice, and in well-structured small-group and whole-class discussions, use language related to topics that are being studied. • Engage students in conversation throughout the day, especially while building knowledge about the world. Use academic words and take opportunities to model academic language while ensuring that the language is comprehensible to students. • Use recasts, expansions, and questions to expand students' syntax and vocabulary.

<p>Key Practice 3:</p> <p>Explicitly Teach the Prerequisite Foundational Skills for Engaging with Print</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential instructional targets for these grades include word reading (decoding), spelling, and fluency. • Teach letter-sound relationships in a systematic and sequential manner. • Teach advanced digraphs, vowel patterns, and two- and three-syllable words. • Once students have a concept of words in print (an understanding of word boundaries), teach high-frequency words (sight words) similarly to other words, helping students read and identify common spelling patterns. • Practice both reading and spelling words. • Provide opportunities to practice new word reading skills within sentences and paragraphs using a wide variety of texts, including decodable texts as well as a wide variety of authentic, engaging, and knowledge-building texts. • Provide opportunities to practice new spelling knowledge with words that have similar spelling patterns as well as with authentic writing opportunities. • To develop fluency, use a variety of approaches, including repeated readings, paired and shared reading, and reader's theater. Teach phrasal and sentence fluency as well as fluency with paragraphs and entire texts.
<p>Key Practice 4:</p> <p>Scaffold the Reading Comprehension of Complex Texts Across Formats, Genres, and Disciplines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential instructional targets for these grades include vocabulary, knowledge, text structure, and listening/reading comprehension strategies. • Activate and build students' topical knowledge related to text. • When students are reading, identify key concepts to target for vocabulary instruction. Provide explicit instruction and multiple opportunities to practice using key terms. • Teach specific text structures that students can use to understand the purpose of a text and how the ideas within it relate to each other. • Support students in making inferences about and summaries of texts. • Read aloud from a variety of genres on topics appropriate for young learners. Select books with vivid illustrations to support comprehension. • Engage students in discussion before, during, and after reading aloud by asking open-ended questions about the text.

Key Practice 5:**Model and Guide the Expression of Written Ideas for a Variety of Audiences**

- Essential instructional targets for these grades include handwriting, communicating to different audiences, and self-regulation.
- Provide daily time for writing.
- Engage students in shared and interactive writing.
- Support students in developing syntactic knowledge to write sentences that clearly communicate meaning.
- Explicitly teach the writing process and support students as they set goals for, plan for, and sustain their attention on their writing.
- Emphasize the importance of writing for specific purposes and audiences.
- Integrate comprehension and writing instruction so that students are building knowledge to support the development of their ideas in their writing.
- Teach students how to use evidence from text to support their ideas.
- Use trade books as models of writing and mentor texts to support students in their writing of opinions, narratives, and informational texts. Scaffold the writing process by providing feedback.

Overview of Tier 1 Literacy Instruction for Grades 3–5

In the upper elementary years, Tier 1 literacy instruction should occur in every content area activity. During these years, students are developing their intermediate literacy skills (see Figure 1, Pyramid of Literacy Development). They are engaging with more complex texts than they did in the primary years, and they are developing a broader repertoire of reading and writing strategies.

<p>Key Practice 1:</p> <p>Center All Students as Expert Language Users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about the linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge students bring to the classroom and help students make connections to what they already know. • Position all language as valuable—clarify that there is no <i>right</i> way to use language, just different ways that are useful for different audiences. • Allow multilingual students to use <i>translanguaging</i>. • Read aloud and make available texts that represent diverse cultures and languages to help students activate, share, and build on their cultural and experiential knowledge.
<p>Key Practice 2:</p> <p>Provide Rich Oral Language Experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use discussion as an opportunity to both build on and develop oral language resources, especially related to the texts and topics being studied. • Explicitly teach and model discussion structures (e.g., via <i>accountable talk</i> or <i>academically productive talk</i>), including how to ask and answer questions, how to agree and disagree respectfully, and how to use evidence to support ideas. • Use a variety of multimodal resources to help students develop vocabulary and listening comprehension in the disciplines and ask students to discuss their developing language knowledge. • Engage students in conversation throughout the day, especially while building knowledge about the world. Use academic words and take opportunities to model academic language while ensuring that the language is comprehensible to students.

<p>Key Practice 3:</p> <p>Explicitly Teach the Prerequisite Foundational Skills for Engaging with Print</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential instructional targets for these grades include advanced word reading, spelling, and fluency. • Explicitly teach and provide opportunities for students to practice with advanced spelling patterns for multisyllabic words. • When students are reading and writing, identify challenging multisyllabic words and help them read and pronounce them. • When students are reading challenging texts, have them engage in repeated readings with a different purpose for each reading to help them build fluency and content-area knowledge simultaneously. Different purposes might include first <i>getting the gist</i>, then <i>reading to understand how specific words are used</i>, and then <i>reading to identify evidence for an argument</i>. • Create opportunities for paired reading, shared reading, and reader’s theater for students to develop fluency skills like prosody and pacing. • As students encounter increasingly complex sentences in their reading, model reading sentences with prosody and give them opportunities to practice reading sentences and paragraphs fluently.
<p>Key Practice 4:</p> <p>Scaffold the Reading Comprehension of Complex Texts Across Formats, Genres, and Disciplines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential instructional targets for these grades include vocabulary, morphology, text structure, knowledge, and comprehension strategies. • To support students’ vocabulary development, identify key terms from readings and other instructional materials they will need to meet learning objectives. • Provide explicit instruction and multiple opportunities to practice using key terms. • Explicitly teach and provide opportunities for students to practice with morphological patterns in words. Help students make connections between morphologically related words (i.e., words that share the same roots and affixes). • When students are reading, point out specific roots and affixes that they can use to help them read and understand words. • Teach specific text structures that students can use to understand the purpose of a text and how the ideas within it relate to each other. • Activate and build topical knowledge related to text. • Support students with specific reading comprehension strategies, like making inferences and generating summaries of texts.

Key Practice 5:**Model and Guide the Expression of Written Ideas for a Variety of Audiences**

- Essential instructional targets for these grades include crafting sentences, paragraphs, and texts for different purposes and audiences and self-regulation in the writing process.
- Always state a clear purpose and audience for every piece of writing and explain how that purpose and audience aligns with the type of writing (e.g., narrative, persuasive, expository).
- Provide models and scaffolds at the sentence level and the paragraph level, like sentence and paragraph frames and explicit instruction on connective/transition words.
- Help students identify how word choice and use of specific details can support the overall purpose of a piece.
- Scaffold every stage of the writing process with mentor text models, graphic organizers, and feedback.
- Integrate comprehension and writing instruction so that students are building knowledge to support the development of their ideas in writing and teach students how to use evidence from text to support their ideas.

Overview of Tier 1 Literacy Instruction for Grades 6–8

In the secondary space, *all* Tier 1 teachers in every content area are responsible for supporting the literacy development of students. In middle school, students are continuing to develop their intermediate literacy skills (see Figure 1, Pyramid of Literacy Development) and are starting to engage in disciplinary literacy development. They are engaging with increasingly complex reading and writing activities and starting to identify how and why literacy is used in different ways and to support different purposes in the disciplines.

<p>Key Practice 1:</p> <p>Center All Students as Expert Language Users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about the linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge students bring to the classroom and help students make connections to what they already know. • Position all language as valuable—clarify that there is no <i>right</i> way to use language, just different ways that are useful for different audiences. • Allow multilingual students to use <i>translanguaging</i>. • Make available and/or read aloud texts that represent diverse cultures and languages to help students activate, share, and build on their cultural and experiential knowledge.
<p>Key Practice 2:</p> <p>Provide Rich Oral Language Experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use discussion as an opportunity to both build on and develop oral language resources specifically related to the texts and topics being studied. • Explicitly teach and model discussion structures (e.g., via <i>accountable talk</i> or <i>academically productive talk</i>), including how to ask and answer questions, how to agree and disagree respectfully, and how to use evidence to support ideas. • Use a variety of multimodal resources to help students develop vocabulary and listening comprehension in the content areas and ask students to discuss their developing language knowledge. • Model the use of academic language, including academic words and ways of questioning and explaining content area ideas.

<p>Key Practice 3:</p> <p>Explicitly Teach the Prerequisite Foundational Skills for Engaging with Print</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential instructional targets for these grades include advanced word reading and advanced fluency. • When students are reading and writing, identify challenging multisyllabic words and help students read and pronounce them. Point out specific roots and affixes that they can use to read words and make connections to other words. • When students are reading challenging texts, have them engage in repeated readings with a different purpose for each reading to help them build fluency and content-area knowledge simultaneously. Different purposes might include first <i>getting the gist</i>, then <i>reading to understand how specific words are used</i>, and then <i>reading to identify evidence for an argument</i>. • As students encounter increasingly complex sentences in their reading, model reading sentences with prosody. • Create opportunities for oral paired reading and shared reading to help students develop fluency skills like prosody and pacing.
<p>Key Practice 4:</p> <p>Scaffold the Reading Comprehension of Complex Texts Across Formats, Genres, and Disciplines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential instructional targets for these grades include vocabulary, morphology, text structure, knowledge, and comprehension strategies. • To support students' vocabulary development, identify key terms from readings and other instructional materials that they will need in order to meet learning objectives. • Provide explicit instruction and multiple opportunities to practice using key terms. • Explicitly teach and provide opportunities for students to practice with morphological patterns in words. Help students make connections between morphologically related words (i.e., words that share the same roots and affixes). • When students are reading, point out specific roots and affixes that they can use to read and understand words. • Teach specific text structures that students can use to understand the purpose of a text and how the ideas within it relate to each other. • Activate and build topical knowledge related to text. Help students connect content area ideas to their own observations, lived experiences, and goals. • Support students with specific reading comprehension strategies, like making inferences and generating summaries of content area texts.

Key Practice 5:**Model and Guide the Expression of Written Ideas for a Variety of Audiences**

- Essential instructional targets for these grades include crafting sentences, paragraphs, and texts for different purposes and audiences and self-regulation in the writing process.
- Always state a clear purpose and audience for every piece of writing and explain how each writing task can support learning in the content area.
- Provide models and scaffolds at the sentence level and the paragraph level, like sentence and paragraph frames and explicit instruction on connective/transition words.
- Help students identify how word choices and use of details can support the overall purpose of a piece.
- Scaffold every stage of the writing process with mentor text models, graphic organizers, and feedback.
- Integrate comprehension and writing instruction so that students are building knowledge to support the development of ideas in their writing and teach students how to use evidence from text to support their ideas.

Overview of Tier 1 Literacy Instruction for Grades 9–12: Disciplinary Literacy

In the secondary space, *all* Tier 1 teachers in every content area are responsible for supporting the literacy development of students. In high school, students are developing and honing their disciplinary literacy skills (see Figure 1, Pyramid of Literacy Development). They are identifying and using the reading, writing, and thinking practices of content areas as they engage with disciplinary texts. These texts are educational texts to help novices learn about a discipline, but they often have features that make them similar to the more challenging texts that experts in the field might use.

<p>Key Practice 1:</p> <p>Center All Students as Expert Language Users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about the linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge students bring to the classroom and help them make connections to what they already know. • Position all language as valuable—clarify that there is no <i>right</i> way to use language, just different ways that are useful for different audiences. • Allow multilingual students to use <i>translanguaging</i>. • Make available and/or read aloud texts that represent diverse cultures and languages to help students activate, share, and build on their cultural and experiential knowledge.
<p>Key Practice 2:</p> <p>Provide Rich Oral Language Experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use discussion as an opportunity to both build on and develop oral language resources specifically related to the texts and topics being studied. • Explicitly teach and model discussion structures that are used in the discipline. Explore how mathematicians, historians, and other content experts discuss important disciplinary ideas. • Use a variety of multimodal resources to help students develop vocabulary and listening comprehension in the discipline and ask students to discuss their developing language knowledge. • Model the use of academic language, including discipline-specific words, general academic words, and ways of questioning and explaining disciplinary ideas.

<p>Key Practice 3:</p> <p>Explicitly Teach the Prerequisite Foundational Skills for Engaging with Print</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential instructional targets for these grades include advanced word reading and advanced fluency. • When students are reading and writing, identify challenging, multisyllabic words, help students read and pronounce them, and point out specific roots and affixes that students can use to read words and make connections to other words. • When students are reading disciplinary texts, have them engage in repeated readings with a different purpose for each reading to help them build fluency and disciplinary knowledge simultaneously. Different purposes might include first <i>getting the gist</i>, and then <i>reading to understand how specific words are used</i>, and then <i>reading to identify evidence for an argument</i>. • As students encounter increasingly complex sentences in their reading, model reading sentences with prosody and give them opportunities to practice reading sentences and paragraphs fluently.
<p>Key Practice 4:</p> <p>Scaffold the Reading Comprehension of Complex Texts Across Formats, Genres, and Disciplines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential instructional targets for these grades include vocabulary, morphology, text structure, knowledge, and comprehension strategies. • To support students' vocabulary development, identify key terms from readings and other instructional materials that they will need in order to meet learning objectives. • Provide explicit instruction and multiple opportunities to practice using key terms. • Explicitly teach and provide opportunities for students to practice with morphological patterns in words. Help students make connections between morphologically related words (i.e., words that share the same roots and affixes). • When students are reading, point out specific roots and affixes that they can use to read and understand words. • Teach specific text structures that students can use to understand the purpose of a text and how the ideas within it relate to each other. • Explain how text structures are used in discipline-specific ways (e.g., science texts are structured differently from social studies texts, which helps authors communicate discipline-specific ideas in ways that make sense for each discipline). • Activate and build topical knowledge related to text. Help students connect disciplinary ideas in instructional materials to their own observations, lived experiences, and goals. • Support students with specific reading comprehension strategies, like making inferences and generating summaries of content area texts, with the goal of understanding discipline-specific ideas.

Key Practice 5:**Model and Guide the Expression of Written Ideas for a Variety of Audiences**

- Essential instructional targets for these grades include crafting sentences, paragraphs, and texts for different purposes and audiences and self-regulation in the writing process.
- Always state a clear purpose and audience for every piece of writing and explain how each writing task can support learning in the discipline.
- Provide models and scaffolds at the sentence level and the paragraph level, like sentence and paragraph frames and explicit instruction on connective/transition words.
- Help students identify how discipline-specific word choices and use of disciplinary details and ideas can support the overall purpose of a writing task.
- Scaffold every stage of the writing process with mentor text models from the discipline, as well as graphic organizers to support planning and feedback.
- Integrate comprehension and writing instruction so that students are building disciplinary knowledge to support the development of their ideas in their writing and teach students how to use evidence from text to support their ideas.

Appendix 2: Additional Resources to Support Implementation

Comprehensive Literacy State Development Brief: Implementing a State Literacy Plan at the Local Level

Tier 1 Resources

- [AdLit.org: All About Adolescent Literacy](#)
- [Equitable Environments and Relationships: Cultivating Strong Tier 1 Practices in Multi-Tiered System of Supports \(recorded webinar\)](#)
- [Nevada Academic Content Standards \(K–12\)](#)
- [Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Standards](#)
- [Nevada Department of Education Approved Instructional Materials](#)
- [Nevada Dyslexia Guidance Documents](#)
- [Nevada English Language Development Standards and Instructional Supports](#)
- [Nevada Educator Performance Framework](#)
- [Resource Roundup: Supporting Early Literacy Development \(blog\)](#)
- [Resource Roundup: Supporting Student Literacy at the Secondary Level \(blog\)](#)
- [Smarter Balanced Tools for Teachers](#)
- [Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School](#)
- [The Lexile Hub](#)
- [Tier 1 Instructional Strategies to Improve K–4 Reading Comprehension](#)

Assessment Resources

- [Assessment Literacy Defined](#)
- [Literacy Assessment: What Everyone Needs to Know: Literacy Leadership Brief](#)
- [Nevada Department of Education Office of Assessments](#)
- [Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making](#)

MTSS Resources

- [Nevada's Framework for Equitable Integrated System of Student Supports](#)

Elementary/All

- [Assisting Students Struggling With Reading: Response to Intervention \(RTI\) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades](#)

- [Three-Tiered Instructional Intervention Model to Promote Literacy Success \(video\)](#)
- [Webinar Series: Data-Driven Implementation of Tiered Interventions with English Learners](#)

Secondary

- [Explicit Morphology Instruction to Improve Overall Literacy Skills in Secondary Students](#)
- [Implementing MTSS in Secondary Schools: Challenges and Strategies](#)
- [Primary Considerations for Adolescent Literacy \(Tiers 2 and 3\)](#)
- [Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4–9](#)

Leadership Resources

- [Guide and Checklists for a School Leader’s Walkthrough During Literacy Instruction in Grades 4–12](#)
- [Learning Forward Action Guide: Principal](#)
- [Learning Forward Action Guide for the Superintendent](#)
- [Learning Forward Action Guide for the System/Central Office](#)
- [Nevada Educator Performance Framework](#)
- [Rubric for Evaluating Reading/Language Arts Instructional Materials for Kindergarten to Grade 5](#)
- [School Leaders’ Literacy Walkthrough for Grades K–3 and 4–12 \(video\)](#)
- [Specialized Literacy Professionals Matrix](#)

Professional Development Resources

- [Learning Forward’s Standards for Professional Learning](#)
- [Nevada’s Standards for Professional Development](#)
- [Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program](#)
- [Northwest Regional Professional Development Program](#)
- [Southern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program](#)

PLC Resources

- [Building Better PL: How to Strengthen Teacher Learning](#)
- [Developing Early Literacy PLCs](#)
- [PLC Facilitator’s Guide for the WWC Practice Guide: Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade](#)
- [PLC Guide for Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School](#)
- [Using Inquiry Cycles in PLCs to Improve Instruction](#)

Literacy Specialist and Coaching Guidance

- [Learning Forward Action Guide for the Coach](#)
- [Reading Specialist Endorsement](#)
- [The Multiple Roles of School-Based Specialized Literacy Professionals](#)
- [University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction](#)
- [University of Nevada, Reno, Online Master's Degree in Reading Curriculum and Instruction](#)

Family Engagement Resources

Resources for Local Education Agencies

- [Early Childhood Parent Involvement and Family Engagement](#)
- [Family Engagement, Language and Literacy Webinar Series](#)
- [Family Engagement: Authentically Integrating Essential Competencies](#)
- [Joining Together to Create a Bold Vision for Next-Generation Family Engagement: Engaging Families to Transform Education](#)
- [Nevada's Family Engagement Guide](#)
- [Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program – Family Engagement Resources](#)
- [Planning for Family Engagement in the Charter School Lifecycle](#)
- [Using Social Media to Engage Families](#)

Resources for Schools

- [Parent Teacher Home Visits](#)
- [Role and Function of School Organizational Teams](#)
- [Shared Leadership Roles: Family Leadership](#)
- [Strategies for Family Engagement to Support Literacy Development](#)
- [Community Resource Mapping](#)

Resources to Support Literacy

- [A First Grade Teacher's Guide to Supporting Family Involvement in Foundational Reading Skills](#)
- [A Kindergarten Teacher's Guide to Supporting Family Involvement in Foundational Reading Skills](#)
- [A Second Grade Teacher's Guide to Supporting Family Involvement in Foundational Reading Skills](#)
- [A Third Grade Teacher's Guide to Supporting Family Involvement in Foundational Reading Skills](#)
- [Developing Your Child's Reading Skills: Tips for Every Age \(English\); Tips for Every Age \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Nevada Talking Book Services](#)
- [Raising Ready Readers \(English\); Raising Ready Readers \(Spanish\)](#)
- [¡Colorín Colorado!: The Preschool Years](#)

Appendix 3: State Demographic and Needs Assessment Data

State Demographics

The state system for Nevada education is unique in that there are 479,240 students across 17 districts with approximately 60,000 students attending 80 school campuses under the authorization of the State Public Charter School Authority. The Nevada Department of Education serves an area of approximately 110,000 square miles—the size of districts ranges from Esmeralda County School District, with only four schools and 89 students, to Clark County School District, the fifth-largest school district in the nation with over 300,000 students. Two densely populated urban school districts, Clark and Washoe, serve the greatest proportion of students. Smaller populations in rural districts are often separated by wide swathes of open, undeveloped land.

During the 2023/24 school year, approximately 14% of students had individualized education plans (IEPs), 14% were multilanguage learners, and 16% of all Nevada residents aged 18 and under were living in poverty.

Table 1. State Student Enrollment Data by Race/Ethnicity

School Year	Am In/AK Native	Asian	Hispanic	Black	White	Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	Total Enrollment
2022/23	3,717	26,628	213,795	59,194	137,495	7,172	36,239	484,240
2023/24	3,602	26,798	215,221	58,495	131,859	7,013	36,589	479,578

Table 2. State Student Enrollment by Special Populations

School Year	Students with IEPs	English Learners	Students in Foster Care	Homeless Students
2022/23	62,623	65,388	1,794	10,270
2023/24	65,918	66,528	1,835	10,551

Access to Pre–K Programs

In the 2023/24 school year, Nevada enrolled 13,516 students in Pre–K programs.

Table 3. 2023/24 Pre–K Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

School Year	Am In/AK Native	Asian	Hispanic	Black	White	Pacific Islander	Two or More Races
2023/24 Enrollment	64	625	6,731	1,842	3,087	105	1,062

Table 4. Pre–K Enrollment by Special Populations

School Year	Students with IEPs	English Learners	Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL)	Students in Foster Care	Homeless Students
2023/24 Enrollment	5,132	2	12,800	81	249

Access to Highly Qualified Teachers

A national teacher shortage, which spiked during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, has strongly impacted Nevada in both urban and rural settings. Nearly 10% (9.58%) of teacher and educational professional positions were vacant during the 2022/23 school year, with vacancies both in urban areas, where there is a higher concentration of low-income, Black, and Latinx students,¹⁸⁴ and in rural areas, which tend to be more challenging to staff. Nevada districts' geographical disparities, size variations, and persistent staffing shortages have proven to be a challenge to maintaining high-quality literacy instruction.

Table 5. Percent of Teacher Vacancies

School Year	Total Number of Reported Positions	Total Number of Reported Vacancies	Percent of Vacancies
2021/22	30,035	3,437	12.44%
2022/23	30,491	2,922	9.58%

Table 6. Distribution of Teachers by Title 1 Free and Reduced Lunch Status

Title 1 Schools' FRL Status	% Teachers Rated Ineffective	% Teachers out of Field	% Inexperienced Teachers (Less Than 3 Years)
2019/20 High FRL	1.03%	3.48%	10.00%
2019/20 Low FRL	0.30%	4.20%	3.32%
2020/21 High FRL	0.71%	4.15%	12.20%
2020/21 Low FRL	0.35%	3.87%	9.05%

Table 7. Distribution of Teachers by Title 1 Minority Populations

Title 1 Schools' Minority Populations	% Teachers Rated Ineffective	% Teachers out of Field	% Inexperienced Teachers (Less Than 3 Years)
2019/20 High Minority Population	1.19%	3.28%	10.64%
2019/20 Low Minority Population	0.57%	3.74%	4.43%
2020/21 High Minority Population	0.57%	3.72%	13.17%
2020/21 Low Minority Population	0.53%	5.10%	8.61%

Academic Performance in Literacy

Despite showing marginal overall growth in school year 2022/23 in English Language Arts (ELA), Nevada has much work to do to meet the needs of all students. In grades 3–8, a state average of 58.9% of students assessed on the ELA Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) scored below standard. When disaggregated, several student groups showed significantly fewer students meeting standard: American Indian/Alaskan Native – 76% below standard; African American – 74.4% below standard; Hispanic – 67% below standard; and Pacific Islander – 64% below standard.¹⁸⁵

All other vulnerable student groups showed even greater gaps in performance on the ELA SBAC: low-income students – 90.9% below standard; English learners – 90.5% below standard; homeless students – 79.2% below standard; and students in foster care – 78.8% below standard.

These data show that many Nevada students are ill-prepared for the incredible opportunities that await.

Table 8. Percent of Students at each SBAC ELA Achievement Level by Grade

Level	Emergent/ Developing	Approaching Standard	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard
State Average	35.1%	23.8%	25.5%	15.5%
8	32.8%	27.8%	29.4%	10.0%
7	31.9%	26.1%	29.8%	12.3%
6	36.0%	25.6%	25.7%	12.7%
5	36.4%	19.9%	26.4%	17.3%
4	39.1%	19.2%	20.8%	20.8%
3	34.6%	24.4%	20.7%	20.3%

Table 9. Average Percent of Grade 3–8 Students at each SBAC ELA Achievement Level by Racial/Ethnic Group

Racial/Ethnic Group	Emergent/ Developing	Approaching Standard	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard
State Average	35.1%	23.8%	25.5%	15.5%
Am In/AK Native	50.8%	25.2%	16.9%	7.1%
Black	50.8%	23.6%	18.1%	7.5%
Hispanic	41.7%	25.5%	22.9%	10.0%
Pacific Islander	37.2%	26.4%	25.1%	11.3%
Two or More Races	27.5%	22.4%	28.8%	23.1%
White	23.6%	22.7%	30.7%	23.0%
Asian	15.7%	18.3%	33.1%	33.0%

Table 10. Average Percent of Grade 3–8 Students at each SBAC ELA Achievement Level by English Learner Status

English Learner Status	Emergent/Developing	Approaching Standard	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard
State Average	35.1%	23.8%	25.5%	15.5%
All	66.9%	21.1%	9.5%	0.0%
Long-Term	72.3%	15.2%	9.9%	0.0%
Newcomer	75.8%	20.1%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 11. Average Percent of Grade 3–8 Students at each SBAC ELA Achievement Level by Socioeconomic and Housing Status

Socioeconomic and Housing Status	Emergent/Developing	Approaching Standard	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard
State Average	35.1%	23.8%	25.5%	15.5%
Not FRL	23.7%	22.4%	30.8%	23.1%
FRL	44.8%	25.1%	21.0%	9.1%
Not Foster	35.1%	23.9%	25.5%	15.6%
Foster	59.1%	19.7%	15.9%	5.3%
Housed	34.5%	23.9%	25.8%	15.8%
Homeless	57.4%	21.8%	15.6%	5.3%

Appendix 4: Current Legislation, Initiatives, and Policies

Current Legislation, Initiatives, and Policies

Nevada’s Legislature and State Board of Education have consistently supported initiatives to improve literacy. Current and ongoing legislation and initiatives include the following:

Legislation

- In 2010, Nevada adopted the Nevada State Standards’ Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts, referred to as the Nevada Academic Content Standards. The standards provide guidance for what each student should learn at each grade level to be successful in college, career, and life.
- Assembly Bill (AB) 289 (2019), a revision of Senate Bill (SB) 391 (2015) Read by Grade 3 initiative, was established to enhance the statewide comprehensive system of early reading instruction and intervention aimed at accelerating the reading growth of students reading below grade level in kindergarten through third grade. AB 289 provides guidance and support for early literacy, particularly in foundational skills.
- AB 400 (2023) establishes a new oversight commission, the Commission on School Funding, to review student progress and recommended reading strategies and programs, including the Early Childhood Literacy and Readiness Program, Read by Grade 3, intensive intervention instruction, statewide assessments, and summer school for nonproficient second and third graders. AB 400 also provides revisions, funding oversight, and accountability to statewide reading initiatives. It will be effective in 2028. (A summary of AB 289 and AB 400 and how they relate to each other can be found in this [Nevada Crosswalk](#).)
- Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 388.159 requires schools to conduct early literacy assessments for students in kindergarten through third grade to identify those who require additional support, allowing for timely and targeted interventions.
- NRS 388.160 requires regular reporting to parents and guardians about their child’s literacy progress, ensuring they are informed and involved in the intervention process.
- NRS 388.161 requires schools to provide intensive reading interventions for students identified as at-risk, with continuous progress monitoring to adjust strategies as needed.
- NRS 391.512 identifies three Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDPs) to provide high-quality professional development across the state: the Northeastern Nevada RPDP, the Northwest RPDP, and the Southern Nevada RPDP. The primary mission of the RPDPs is to provide training to teachers and administrators concerning the statewide academic standards. In addition, the RPDPs implement the Nevada Early Literacy Intervention Program, which provides professional development on evidence-based reading methods.
- Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 391.285 specifies the requirements for holding an Endorsement to Teach Reading.
- NAC 391.290 specifies the requirements for a Reading Specialist Endorsement.

Recent Initiatives

- The Pathway to Reading Excellence at School Sites (PRESS) (2022–2024) is a partnership between the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) and the University of Minnesota’s Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement. PRESS provides job-embedded professional development and support for teachers and site-based literacy specialists. It supports educators with the implementation of evidence-based practices using the science of reading and a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to ensure students are receiving high-quality and meaningful instruction grounded in the most current reading research.
- The Nevada Equitable Integrated System of Supports is a partnership between NDE and the Nevada Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) Technical Assistance Center to build infrastructure at both the state education agency and the local education agency levels to integrate all of Nevada’s school climate practices and initiatives, including PBIS, Social Emotional Academic Development (SEAD), and School Mental Health within an integrated MTSS. SEAD provides a framework for supporting the whole child, a practice that evidence shows helps to improve academic growth.
- Nevada Reading Week has been celebrated statewide for more than 40 years to inspire and instill the joy of reading and the importance of reading across Nevada.

Collectively, this legislation and these initiatives provide funding, policy, support staff, and professional development to support literacy improvement across the state.

Appendix 5: Glossary

accessibility	the quality of being usable, reachable, and obtainable
accommodations	adjustment for different situations, circumstances; examples with literacy instruction include extended time for reading and testing and speech-to-text/text-to-speech
artificial intelligence (AI)	AI refers to computer systems designed to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence. These systems analyze data, understand language, recognize images, make predictions, and take actions. Unlike traditional programs with fixed rules, AI systems learn and adapt based on the information they process. ¹⁸⁶
asset-based approach	This approach positions students in light of their strengths and not just their areas of growth. An asset-based approach to instruction asks the question: What is present to build upon?
blend	to combine two or more consonants in a word, with the sound of each consonant being maintained in order to pronounce the word
cognates	words in two languages that share a similar meaning, spelling, and pronunciation, such as the English/Spanish cognate “ <i>inspiration/inspiración</i> ” ¹⁸⁷
competency-based	a learning approach that focuses on students demonstrating their mastery of a subject area
comprehension	making meaning of what is viewed, read, or heard
content-area	a specific academic subject or field of study that focuses on a particular topic or area of knowledge and skill
context clues	hints provided by a text’s author to support readers in connecting their prior knowledge to interpret the vocabulary and message of a text
conventions	guidelines for how to structure words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs to convey meaning effectively for a given audience, including spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar
curriculum	for a specific subject area, the intended, enacted, assessed, and learned experiences for a specific age, grade level, or course
data-driven	a strategy that involves making decisions based on data analysis and interpretation instead of intuition
decodable text	reading materials designed to prompt beginning readers to apply their increasing knowledge of how the alphabetic system works

decoding	the ability to map individual sounds to letters or groups of letters to pronounce a printed word
deficit-focused	an emphasis on reading difficulty that refers to the struggling readers as the problem rather than to the inadequacy or inappropriateness of the instruction
developmentally	related to a person's growth and development; with literacy instruction, refers to aligning instruction and instructional materials with a student's current skills and knowledge
diagnostic	relating to or used in diagnosis of the root cause of a problem
digraphs	two successive letters that represent a single sound, for example, the <i>sh</i> in <i>shoe</i>
disciplinary literacy	refers to the specifics of reading, writing, and communicating in a discipline focusing on the ways of thinking, the skills, and the tools that are used by experts in the disciplines
dyslexia	a neurological learning disability characterized by difficulties with accurate and fluent word recognition and poor spelling and decoding abilities that typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language (Nevada Revised Statute 388.429)
equity	the learning needs of every student are supported in an environment where all students are valued, are respected, and see themselves in their curriculum and instructional materials while experiencing academic success without regard to differences in age, gender, socioeconomic status, religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, native language, national origin, or citizenship status ¹⁸⁸
evidence-based	an approach that emphasizes the practical application of the findings of the best available current research
explicit	precisely and clearly expressed or readily observable; with literacy instruction, refers to clear and direct explanation of literacy components and skills
fidelity	refers to how closely a program or curriculum is implemented as intended by its designers
fluency	the ability to speak, read, and write with ease and accuracy with oral reading fluency being the ability to read text accurately, with sufficient speed, prosody, and expression
formative assessment	information about student learning as it happens and is used to adjust instruction and improve student learning
graphemes	a letter or group of letters that represent a single sound (phoneme) in a language (<i>b</i> is a grapheme that represents the sound /b/, and <i>igh</i> is a grapheme that represents /ā/ (long a sound))
horizontal alignment	refers to the degree of alignment between standards, curricula, and assessments within a grade level
informational text	texts used to teach or convey non-fiction knowledge about a topic in math, science, social studies, and other content areas

inquiry	learning oriented around significant questions students ask and the exploration of sources of information that lead students to form conclusions
interdisciplinary	drawing from or characterized by participation of two or more fields of study
intervention	supplemental support, provided with more intensity than typical instruction, to support students with specific areas of development
linguistics	the scientific study of language, including its structure, evolution, and use
literacy	Literacy is the ability to actively and critically read, write, speak, and listen across all academic content areas and/or career pathways in order to construct meaning and communicate effectively. A literate individual is able to independently and collaboratively function in a global society by using evidence, creativity, questioning, reflecting, and problem-solving skills.
mindset	a habitual or characteristic mental attitude that determines how you will interpret and respond to situations
morpheme	the smallest unit of a language that has both meaning and sound (affixes and roots are types of morphemes)
morphology	the study of structure and forms of words, especially related to roots, base words, and affixes, with attention to derivation, inflection, and compounding
multimodal literacies	systems of representation that use different ways of expressing ideas with different forms of media, such as print, drawing, photography, and audio and video recording
multimodal text	These texts are a text design that incorporates language, images, sounds, and media to communicate or teach information. For example, a story found online about Mayan civilization might include text, photos, and videos taken from space.
narrative text	written or oral language designed to recount a sequence of related events or to tell a story; can take the form of song, poetry, drama, or prose
newcomer	a student who has recently arrived in the United States from outside the country and is learning English
paired reading	a cooperative or collaborative task that involves two students taking turns and supporting each other's oral reading and comprehension of a text
pedagogy	teaching methods that educators use to help students learn
phoneme	the smallest unit of sound in spoken language
phonemic awareness	the ability to detect and manipulate the smallest units (i.e., phonemes) of spoken language
phonics	This is an approach to teaching reading that emphasizes the systematic relationship between the sounds of language and graphemes (i.e., letters or letter combinations) that represent those sounds. Learners use this knowledge to decode printed words.

print concepts	understandings of written language acquired by young children as they interact with literate persons and text
read-aloud	This is the practice of a teacher or designated reader to orally read a text with large or small groups while sharing pictures and illustrations. The intent is to model proficient reading and language, promote conversation, and build conceptual understanding.
repeated reading	a method of reading fluency instruction in which students reread a text aloud until the reader achieves a satisfactory level of fluency with that text
scaffold	a teaching technique that involves providing temporary support to students as they learn new concepts or skills
screening	testing objects or persons in order to identify those with particular characteristics
social-emotional learning	a lifelong process through which children and adults acquire and apply the knowledge and skills to understand and manage emotions; set and achieve goals; feel and show empathy for others; establish and maintain supportive relationships; and make responsible and caring decisions
syllable	a unit of speech, either a word or part of a word, containing one vowel or vowel sound
syntax	the pattern or structure of word order in sentences, clauses, and phrases
systematic instruction	Systematic instruction in reading is a plan of instruction (i.e., scope and sequence) that takes students through an explicit sequence of learning activities.
text complexity	refers to features in a text that could cause some readers to have difficulty with comprehension; components to be considered when determining complexity include general readability, levels of meaning, structures, and language clarity
treatment	care provided to improve a situation
vernacular	being characteristic of or appropriate to everyday language
vertical alignment	refers to the degree of alignment among standards, curricula, and assessments across grade levels ¹⁸⁹

Appendix 6: Nevada's Family Engagement Framework

Nevada's Family Engagement Framework is shown as a continuum in [Figure 6](#). On the left end is parent involvement and on the right end is family engagement. Relationship building spans the entire continuum. The following are the steps of the continuum, from left to right:

- Parents talk to teachers at the time children arrive and when they leave at the end of the day.
- Parents participate in social events.
- Parents attend meetings.
- Staff ask questions about the child, his or her family, and home life.
- Staff provide resources/ideas for families to use at home and in the community.
- Families share suggestions and concerns with staff.
- Families and staff work together to create activities that reflect the cultural traditions of the families in the program.
- Families volunteer for leadership activities and provide ongoing and meaningful input about programming.
- Families and staff share in the development of activities and events over time based on their strengths/interests/abilities.
- Families and staff work together to discuss, implement, and share responsibility for a child's learning plan.

Endnotes

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